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Victims of Marriage

BY

JUDGE BULLION

THE HELLER PUBLISHING CO.
32 - 34 WESLEY BLOCK, COLUMBUS, OHIO
1890

Victims of Marriage

"All things the worst are corruptions from things originally designed as the best."

BY

JUDGE BULLION

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A Personal Statement.

NEARLY a year ago I offered the manuscript of the following pages to a prominent publishing house in the East — where the wise men are still presumed to dwell — for publication. Some two months thereafter it was returned to me with a letter containing, among other things, this statement, "The report is that, though it is fairly interesting, and written with a good deal of rhetorical power, it is scarcely up to publication standard."

Not long after that, this same publishing house made an assignment. The author of a rejected manuscript may not be an impartial judge, yet he has a right to conclude that the public did not indorse the "publication standard" of that house.

A physician, friendly to me, read the manuscript, or rather was in at the bornin' of this child of my intellect. With some slight changes, which he suggested, he thought it would be a goodly man-child.

Next, an author and poet, of no mean ability, kindly undertook to read it. He said there were things in it that were unworthy of me, but made that saying quite easy to swallow by accompanying it with a good allowance of taffy in the following, "The whole book gives evidence of a

much keener intellect than I had given you credit with possessing."

It was then submitted to a newspaper editor and book reviewer. While he seemed to appreciate the efforts of the author he did not place a very high estimate on the results. He thought the title was not a suitable one for a novel. He suggested, "A Rusty Ring." He salved over his criticism with this doubtful compliment, "People want story and not philosophy."

A Drummer was the next to read. After he had finished he kindly wrote me his estimate of what I had written in the following frank and candid words: "Your effort is generally good, and I have read many worse books that were popular. I honestly think, with some slight changes which you will be able to make, that it will *sell* (?) (the interrogation point is mine), and what is more, do good."

A talented young lady said it was decidedly "Frenchy," and very fascinating, yet it was not one of the books that she could not stay away from.

The pesky thing has followed me from ocean to ocean, and, like Banquo's ghost, would never down. To get well rid of it I have placed it in the hands of my publishers to do as they may think for the best. With it, goes this parting wish, to which all others are as nothing, that no one who reads will find in it any thought or sentiment that can be used to justify a wrongful act or a wicked purpose.

THE AUTHOR.

COLUMBUS, OHIO,
April 1, 1890.

PART I

CHAPTER I

If circumstances could draw aside the curtains that darken the background and allow the "invisible events" to "make mouths" at the characters in the foreground, what sorry figures these incontrovertible truth-tellers would ofttimes cut.

IT was three o'clock in the afternoon when Dr. Arlington entered the private office of John Ashton, attorney-at-law. It was but a few minutes later when the occupants of the general office were startled with the noise of loud talking and the sound of fierce struggling as of men engaged in mortal combat. In another instant there was a cry of murder and the sound as of something falling heavily to the floor.

Before any one could reach the door to the private office, Mr. Ashton, with face as pale as death, rushed into the general office and hurried toward the door at the main entrance. As he ran he cried out in loud and excited tones "Stop that man in the hall." "Go to the front entrance. Come with me, some one, for God's sake, there has been a murder committed in my office."

He passed out the side door of the general office. A

man coming through the hallway accompanied him to the rear entrance. To this man he related what had happened. They saw no one in the halls or passage-way of the building.

Ashton continued his appeals for help until he reached the ground. A policeman, attracted by his repeated cries, met him as he reached the street. To the officer's inquiry, "What's the matter?" Ashton replied, "Matter enough!"

"Why are you so excited?"

"Did you see a man coming out of this building?"

"When?"

"Just now."

"No, sir."

"How long have you been here?"

"Fully ten minutes."

"And have seen no one coming out here?"

"I have seen no one coming or going in this hallway or main entrance, except the man whose horse is hitched at the curb. He went up this way and has not come down."

"That was Dr. Arlington," said Ashton, "and he is now in my private office a dead man, I fear."

A crowd had gathered at the main office and completely filled it. It was with difficulty that Ashton and the policeman elbowed their way to the scene of the tragedy.

They found Dr. Arlington lying on his right side, his head resting on his right arm, which had been lifted above his head in the act of falling, or had been raised to ward off the blow that caused his death.

There was a gaping wound in the neck, extending from

the "Adam's apple" in front beyond the main carotid artery on the left side of the neck. The artery had been completely severed. The left hand clasped the handle of a dagger that had been thrust into the left breast below the heart.

Ashton said he was alone in his private office when Dr. Arlington came in; that he had invited him to a seat after the usual formality of hand shaking, and as the Doctor was about to sit, a man wearing a black mask so as to entirely conceal his identity, sprang from behind an alcove in the room and rushed upon the Doctor. The Doctor sprang to his feet; as he did so the man caught him by the whiskers and struck at him with the dagger, inflicting the wound in the neck.

Ashton said he then sprang at the man in the mask and partially succeeded in separating them, when the murderer eluded his grasp and plunged the dagger into the Doctor's body and started for the side door. The Doctor in falling had separated Ashton from the man in the mask, who at once opened the door and passed out and closed it before Ashton could reach him. Ashton followed closely but not in time to prevent the door from closing. As he caught hold of the knob he placed his other hand on the night latch and tried to open the door. The door did not open; he gave it another trial but did not succeed. Then, in his excitement, he ran to the general office and gave the alarm.

The door at which Ashton said the murderer had made

his escape was then examined by the officer and found to be locked as Ashton had said, but not by the night latch from the inside; that was still unlocked, and the bolt of the lock below was the one that secured the door.

This fact changed the appearance of all the circumstances. Ashton was motionless and dumb while the officer was searching for the key, only to be completely overcome when it was found on the floor not three feet from the door.

A critical condition indeed. A man found dead in your private office, no one present at the time of your outcry but the murdered man and yourself, so far as can be ascertained from the appearance of the surroundings, the door locked from within and the key found lying upon the floor of the room. Here is incontrovertible proof that the door was locked from the inside prior to the time the act was committed.

The place was cleared at once by the officer, that he might make further search for the murderer if he still secreted himself in the several alcoves in the room or among the book-cases. It was but the work of a moment for the officer to satisfy himself that no one was in hiding, and that Ashton was the only person in the room with the murdered man at the time the act was done.

Ashton was appalled at this turn of affairs. He was at a loss to know what to do. He could give no account of the matter other than that he had already related. That was now so unsatisfactory to the mind of the officer that there was

but one course open which he felt justified in pursuing, and that was to cause Ashton's arrest. This he did at once.

Ashton had dropped into a chair and was staring vacantly around the room. The officer approached him and said: "Mr. Ashton, it becomes my duty to put you under arrest."

"For what?" said Ashton.

"For taking the life of this man who lies here in your private office."

"You are unreasonable," said Ashton. "I told you I did not do the act."

"As a lawyer, Mr. Ashton, I should think you ought to see that the unreasonable comes from you rather than me," the officer replied.

"But I tell you that Dr. Arlington was my friend. What possible motive could I have in killing him?" queried Ashton.

"We will leave that part of the matter to be settled elsewhere," said the officer. "You are under arrest."

Ashton bowed his head in submission and sat motionless. The officer placed his hand on the prisoner's shoulder and said, "You will come with me."

"With you, where to?" said Ashton.

"To jail, sir, of course, where do you suppose?" was the almost sullen reply.

"Have the proper steps been taken to apprehend the guilty man?" asked Ashton.

With a half quizzical and half disdainful look the officer replied, "I think they have, sir."

The officer told him that the facts had been communicated to police headquarters, and that every avenue of escape was being carefully guarded. This seemed to calm Ashton's fears, and he asked the officer to call the coroner that an examination might be make at once and relieve him from the suspicions that the circumstances attached to him.

Ashton was at this time one of the leading members of the bar, and the strong man of the law firm of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion. Out of consideration for his high standing the officer complied with his request and soon had the coroner in the presence of the dead body of Dr. Arlington. A jury was soon impanneled from among the by-standers and the *post-mortem* began.

Fear and dread were pictured on the face of every one present when the coroner arose to swear the jury. The word had gone out that the key to the private office had been found on the inside of the room, and that the circumstances pointed to Ashton as the guilty man.

Every one was disposed to take as charitable a view of the case as the circumstances would admit, and suspended judgment until the facts would point in some other direction. But to the amazement of all, the facts did not point in some other direction, for, no sooner had the examination begun than every circumstance declared Ashton's guilt.

The officer in the most delicate manner possible, asked

Ashton if he wish to await the result of the coroner's examination, or would he consent to go to the city prison at once.

"Go to the city prison," said Ashton. "Why do you ask me to go to prison?"

"I have informed you," replied the officer, "that you are under arrest for the killing of Dr. Arlington, and it is my duty to see that you are taken into the custody of the law."

"But I have told you," said Ashton, "that I did not harm one hair of Dr. Arlington's head."

"Well, what if you did?" was the officer's retort.

"You astonish me, sir," replied Ashton. "You are the first man to ever intimate that I would make a statement that was not strictly true."

"That might be accounted for easily, Mr. Ashton," said the officer.

"I do not understand you, sir," said Ashton.

"You have never been charged with murder before," said the officer.

"Who dares charge me with murder now?"

"If you care to wait for the conclusion of the coroner's inquest you may be able to answer that question yourself, Mr. Ashton."

"If there is no objection on the part of the coroner and the jury I would like to remain until this examination is concluded," said Ashton.

"I have none," said the coroner, "and I think I can answer for the gentlemen composing this jury."

Ashton bowed in grateful acknowledgment, and the coroner went on.

The first thing the coroner did was to raise the left arm of the dead man and seek for the pulse. Life was extinct.

In his death struggle, Dr. Arlington had grasped the handle of the dagger and partially drew it from the wound in his breast. His hand in death covered the handle of the knife. When the coroner raised the hand and placed the arm by the dead man's side he was startled with the sight of the name on the handle of the knife. Without removing the knife from the body he called each of the jurymen to examine the handle. When all of them had made a careful examination he inquired if they were satisfied as to what inscription was on the knife handle.

There was a unanimous response in the affirmative. "Then I will remove it from the body."

"Gentlemen," said the coroner, "you have examined the handle of this dagger, are you prepared to say what you saw there?"

"We are," was the unanimous response.

"Then you may state what it was."

"The name of John Ashton," said the foreman.

"Gentlemen, what say you all?"

"So say we all."

Ashton covered his face with his hands and uttered a

stifled and suppressed moan. All eyes were turned toward him. He raised his head, folding his arms across his breast.

He looked appealingly at the coroner and the officer, and then his eyes swept quickly over the faces of every one in the room. He did not see the first look of sympathy or pity in the face of one of the entire number. He thought it might be a mistake. How could such a thing happen? Were they not mistaken? He was the first to speak.

"Mr. Coroner, I have always considered you a friend of mine."

"I have always taken pride in so considering you, Mr. Ashton."

Extending his hand, Ashton said, "let me see that dagger, or tell me that you are all mistaken."

"No one would be happier than I," said the coroner, "to tell you that Mr. Ashton, if it were true, but as you request it, look and examine for yourself."

Ashton took the dagger from the trembling hand of the coroner. He could not believe his own eyes. He spelled it out in full. And then, as if in a dream, said, "J-o-h-n, A-s-h-t-o-n." He drew his hand across his eyes and looked again. His awe-struck gaze was painful to behold. But the words were there and they would not down.

He returned the dagger to the coroner. There was a far away look in his eyes as he began to talk. He did not address his words to any one in particular. It was the outer senses of the lawyer communicating with the inner consciousness of the man.

"I am the victim of a plot, a fiendish plot. Who is the villain that has planned and executed this murder?" Then looking about him as if waking from a dream, he said, "I demand an investigation."

"Be calm," said the officer, "the investigation is coming fast enough."

"It is not within the scope of my authority to examine you, would you have any objections to my looking through your private desk for the scabbard to this dagger?"

"Gladly sir," said Ashton, "gladly," and handed him the key.

The desk was gone through with in a very careful manner without any indications of scabbard until the bottom drawer was reached and there in the back end of the drawer was found the object of search, carefully done up in tissue paper. It also had engraved on the side the name of John Ashton.

This was but the beginning of surprises for poor Ashton. The next link in the chain was still more surprising than the first, if that were possible. A crumpled and crushed letter was tightly gripped in the right hand of the dead man. Its contents came like a flash of lightning out of a clear sky. It was in Ashton's own hand-writing. Written on his private letter-head. Signed by him and dated the same day at eleven o'clock in the morning and read as follows:

"Dear Doctor:

"Kindly call at my private office this afternoon at three sharp. Don't fail. Business important to both of us."

"Truly your friend,

11 A. M.–10–10–'8—. "John Ashton."

Holding the crushed and crumpled sheet near enough for Ashton to see to read, the coroner said: "Is that your letter-head?"

"It looks as though it might be," said Ashton. "You can compare it with the paper in my desk." It was found on camparison to be the same in every particular.

"Do you recognize it as being the same?" asked the coroner of Ashton.

"It is in all respects similar," said Ashton, "but where it came from I am unable to tell."

"Will you examine this signature," said the coroner, "and tell this jury whether it is your hand-writing?"

"I think I had better consult counsel," said Ashton, "before I go further in this matter."

This was rather an unexpected reply, and roused the suspicions of the coroner. He drew himself up to his full height, and with more than wonted imperiousness thus addressed Ashton: "I don't think, Mr. Ashton, that a lawyer of your reputation and ability need consult another lawyer before saying that he did or did not write his name." Folding down the contents of the letter the coroner held the paper near enough for Ashton to see to read. "What do you say, Mr. Ashton?"

Ashton was hurt. "I should say," said he, "that was not a proper way to inquire of a witness as to his knowledge of even his own signature."

"I should think," said the coroner rather sarcastically, "that when your own life is at stake that you would forget to quibble."

"You seem to forget, Mr. Coroner, that if *your* life was at stake that you would feel that you had a right to quibble for it."

"I am not a lawyer, Mr. Ashton, and there is the difference between you and me; we will not quibble."

"Pardon me, Mr. Coroner, I have no wish to quibble; I am only exercising my right. If you will stop to consider, I think you will agree with me that you would not like, under such circumstances, to hazard an opinion without first having seen the contents of the letter."

"If I was innocent I do not think it would make much difference to me whether I saw the contents of the letter," said the coroner. A sickly smile lighted up the faces of one or two of the jury. The coroner's reply was at the lawyer's expense, and the lawyer is always fair game for the laughers.

"As you do not see fit to express an opinion," said the coroner, "I will read this letter, then you can probably say whether you did or did not write it. How does that strike you, Mr. Ashton?"

"I am at your mercy, Mr. Coroner, you will do as you see fit, I presume."

"I will do my duty," said the coroner savagely.

Ashton bowed his head and was silent. The coroner read the letter with a great deal of deliberation. When he had finished reading he turned to Ashton and said, "Now do you think you dare venture an opinion as to whether that is your signature?"

"Yes, sir," said Ashton, "that is a base forgery."

"It is?"

"I say it most emphatically, it is a forgery throughout. I never saw nor ever thought of writing such a letter to my friend. That is to my mind conclusive proof of a plot," said Ashton.

"I wish it was conclusive to my mind, Mr. Ashton," said the coroner.

He then turned the letter toward the light and examined it more carefully than before. After some little pause, he said, "If I know anything about your hand writing, and I think I do, Mr. Ashton, that is a very clever forgery."

"Very clever indeed," said Ashton, "I could not have done it better myself." The forlorn hopelessness of Ashton's face and the sadness of the tone in which these last words were uttered touched every heart.

The news of such an extraordinary murder flew on the wings of the wind. The evening dailies soon appeared, and the newsboys were crying in shrill tones, "All about the murder of Dr. Arlington." A surgical instrument maker, and friend of the Doctor, hearing this startling statement, hastily glanced over the head lines of the paper and repaired at once to the scene of the tragedy.

He arrived before the examination was completed and at once informed the officer in charge of Ashton that he was in possession of important facts relating to the matter. He was admitted into the presence of the coroner and his jury. His testimony was of a very startling character. He began by saying that he was a surgical instrument maker, and resided at No.—— ——street; his name was J. K. Ward.

"About two weeks ago," said he, "I made a dagger for a man whom I now see before me. It was of the Bowie style, ivory handle, inlaid with gold, and had the name on the handle."

"Would you be positive as to what the name was?" asked the coroner.

"I have the man's name in my pass-book, in which orders of that nature are recorded at the time they are taken."

"Do you have that pass-book with you now?" inquired the coroner.

"Yes sir, I have kept it in my pocket ever since the day the order was taken, for I had some suspicions and no little misgiving about the matter both at the time the order was left and when the man came for the knife."

"That last statement is altogether gratuitous," said the coroner.

The instrument maker seemed to be anxious to relieve himself of the book and without being asked to do so, handed it to the officer who in turn passed it to the coroner.

"You will find the order on page 25 under date of—."

"When did you make this entry?" asked the coroner.

"The day the order was given as appears in the book."

"Would you be able to identify the knife if it was shown you?"

"I would sir."

"How?"

"By my trade mark."

"You may look at that knife," said the coroner, "and tell us if it is the one you made, to fill the order in the book you have presented here."

"I find my trade mark on it and recognize it as the knife I made to fill the order I have recorded in my pass-book now in your possession," said the instrument maker.

Taking the knife from the hand of the witness the coroner asked him to state to the jury what his trade mark consisted of.

"My trade mark," said he, "is composed of two scalpels crossed at the middle of the blades and the initials of my name starting on the left with J.; the K. at the top, and the W. at the right and placed on the instrument made by me with a steel die."

"You may give the name of the person for whom you made this knife," said the coroner.

"I made it for a man who said his name was John Ashton, and I recognize him as being the gentlemen sitting in that chair," pointing toward Ashton, "on the day stated in my pass-book."

"To whom did you deliver it?"

"To that man," again pointing toward Ashton, "day before yesterday."

"What was said or done at the time the knife was delivered to Mr. Ashton?" asked the coroner.

"When he came to get the knife, and as he was handing me the money for it, I asked him what he wanted of such a knife as that?" replied the instrument maker.

"What reply, if any, did he make?"

"He said he was going up into the mountains the coming month on a deer hunt, and was getting it made for that purpose."

This net-work of circumstances made the duty of the jury plain. The verdict was unanimous, and was announced within ten minutes.

"Dr. Arlington came to his death at the hands of John Ashton, by means of a dagger, with which the said John Ashton inflicted a wound in the throat and left breast, causing instant death."

"It has been truly said that every large collection of human beings, however well educated, has a strong tendency to become a mob."

Dr. Arlington's death was soon known at the medical university, which was but a square from where he was murdered. The doctor was dean of the faculty, and a general favorite among the students.

The news of his death created intense excitement among

the students, and in an instant the entire number rushed to the office of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion.

The side entrance and door to Ashton's private office had been closed and guarded by police. The main entrance to the general office had been kept open for the admission of the coroner's jury and the witnesses. Several officers were busy controlling the crowd and keeping the passage way unobstructed.

Julia Bullion, of the law firm of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion, arrived at the office a few minutes in advance of the students, and had learned the main facts and verdict of the coroner's jury. She was standing in the center of the main office in conversation with an officer when the head of the column of students forced its way in and demanded from the police the delivery of Ashton to them to be dealt with according to their will and pleasure.

The leader of the students halted when he saw that he was confronted by a woman, tall, young, handsome, calm, and self-possessed in the midst of so much excitement.

She did not wait for the officer's reply. "Young gentlemen, your demand is unreasonable. You certainly can not expect the officers in charge to respect it."

"Pay no attention to a woman." "No time for talk," and other expressions of similar import came from different ones of the students as they forced their way into the main office. Those, without hearing the loud words of those within, pressed on until the main office was filled, and Julia

Bullion was forced into the door-way leading to the private office of Ashton, where he was in charge of the police.

She was accustomed to rely upon her own resources. She did not appeal to the officers. She faced that crowd of angry and excited students without betraying the least embarrassment or emotion.

The more brutal and blood-thirsty ones flourished scalpels and were loud in their demands. They would mete out summary justice. They would dispense with court, jury, lawyers, and hangman.

If Ashton was to be removed it must be by the side door, and that too before the crowd gathered there. He could cross the room from where he sat and go out the side door without being observed by any one in front. If his retreat could be covered he was safe. No one could better perform that service than his junior partner.

She lifted her hand as if about to speak. "Young gentlemen, do you know what you are attempting to do?" There was a pause. There was no response to her question other than the labored breathing of this excited and infuriated mob.

"Will you hear me?" Those in the hall and near the outer door shouted, "No! No!" while those near her who saw that the unpleasant part of the self-imposed task would fall upon them, shouted, "Yes! Yes!"

She raised her hand again as an indication that she wanted to be heard. A dozen or more voices said, "Hear! Hear!"

"Young gentlemen, this commonwealth demands no such action from you. In your calmer moments you will shrink from taking such responsibilities upon yourselves as you now court. You have no reason to fear that the murder of Dr. Arlington will not be avenged. If Mr. Ashton is the guilty one there is no power or influence that can liberate him. The even hand of justice needs no aid from you. Calls for no assistance from any one not charged with the duties of her offices. She is already backed and intrenched behind the power, wealth and authority of government. She is clothed with the mystic power of the majority. Have no fears. She will be able to hold the scales with equal hand against one poor defenseless man single handed and alone."

While Julia Bullion was addressing the angry crowd in the main office the police in charge quietly removed Ashton to the street by the side entrance and hurried him off to prison.

CHAPTER II

"It was a triumph of mediocrity, sweet to majorities, and destiny consented to the irony."

THE commonwealth made its case on the day of trial, as the commonwealth so often does, with banter, bravado, and brutality.

Little souls gloat over the laurels woven out of the tears and groans and heartaches of the unfortunate. Little minds piece out a verdict from the shreds and patches of the truth and content themselves with looking at the wrong side of the tapestry that forms the warp and woof of the facts. They see nothing but the blurred and confused mass of colors because they cannot rise above themselves to the level on which circumstances are themselves formulated and take on shape and color.

Parade, ye puppet counsel for the commonwealth, "jerked by unseen wires," flaunt your "paste-board passions and desires," in the faces of the other puppets in the "box."

But know ye all, that the silent majority of yesterday will soon be joined by the boisterous minority of to-day, not in search of retribution, but being searched by the ineffable brightness of the swift-coming to-morrow, where the accused and accuser will meet upon the broad level of an unerring judgment, where every heart will be stripped of

the attributes that made it deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, where the truth will be freed from the color of circumstances and float forever in the bright empyrean, rejoicing ever more in the spotless purity and beauty of its magnificent might.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Dr. Arlington were all tricked out with the letter, the dagger, its identity by the maker, and poured into the ears of that spongy excrescence of the judicial tribunal—called a jury—until it was filled, bloated, and glutted to oblivion of the real facts.

Oh, the jocose satire of our boasted justice and liberty. How beautiful it appears when applied to our enemies. How revolting when measured out to ourselves. A pad of blotting paper with limited capacity. When it has absorbed to fullness it must reject all else.

John Ashton found the jury, that had been sworn well to try and true deliverance make, a mere blotting pad saturated with the circumstances before he could be heard. It was to no purpose that he proved that at the time he was supposed to have gone to the surgical instrument maker's place he was engaged in a trial of a case in the very room where he was being tried for his life.

Dr. Arlington was murdered in his private office, if the real perpetrator could not be found the law must be satisfied, and John Ashton must be compelled into the great and everlasting indolence of death, rather than have suspicion lurk behind the balance of the scales held in justice's hand.

Able and learned counsel argued in vain that a man

of Ashton's knowledge and appreciation of the power of circumstances would have woven around himself such a complete net work of tell-tale truths that the absolute completeness was conclusive of a plot.

O the beauty, the power, the glory of that effete excrescence; sacred because hoary headed with age. How completely it demonstrates the tendency of civilization to cling to customs because they are ancient.

A victim of a plot caught in the vortex of crushing circumstances. "Innocent," says the law, "until you are proven guilty." But you will not be allowed to lift so much as a finger in the proof of your innocence until the power and might of the State, backed by the vindictive malevolence of the State's representative, ambitious to succeed in bringing the guilty to punishment, has held you up to the scorn and contempt and ridicule of the world. The wager of battle was not more absurd. It is living after you have died the death, to prove that you were innocent.

Society is the loaded dice. The packed jury, ever in the box, ready to take the testimony of some unfortunate after everything that can be said to his discredit has first been submitted. It was ever thus. Circumstances must be accepted as conclusive as against the only person living that has a right to negative them.

"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

CHAPTER III

"Men may be mad for opinions, but who can be mad for facts."

LEGAL learning, tact, and talent exhausted all their resources to no purpose. Judge and jury and counsel all believed that Ashton was the only man who was in a position to know the truth and able to tell it without fear or favor. Not one of them would have dared to have met him outside the trial room, even if upon his solemn oath, and said he was not. No, not one of them composing the apostolic twelve would have gone forth and said, making himself individually responsible, that he ought to suffer the death penalty.

Shame, then, on the civilization of the nineteenth century that would have twelve men say, upon their solemn oaths, what one of them would not have the courage to do alone. Shame, then, on that civilization, the integral unit of which does not have the high moral courage and sense of right that each individual composing that unit by nature possesses. Shame on the civilization that needs must organize itself into a howling, frenzied mob before it can trample under foot the crushed and bruised and bleeding and broken heart that each individual member would have bathed in tears of love and sympathy, and given his life blood to have saved.

John Ashton was the one man who knew that he was innocent, but dumb circumstances said he was not, and the

howling mob, the conservators of law and order, decreed that an opinion based upon cowardice must outweigh all the truth, because the perpetrator of the act stood in the spot shadowed by the light of circumstances, and to the law was unknown.

The yard-stick of circumstantial evidence is the only unit of measure acceptable to society. To it the certain knowledge of one or two has no weight, if the act declared to have been done rises above the level of the comprehension of society.

The cloud of circumstances blotted out the bright, particular star of truth, and the maddened crowd declared that because the darkness obscured their vision no light could elsewhere exist.

How remorseless and pitiless is that would-be incontrovertible certainty circumstance? It has that sort of halo around it that is mistaken for dry light. It throws shadows and darkness over objects and persons which would otherwise be luminous but for its deception. It makes of one object two different phantoms, and plays off the one against the other. It is the *camera obscura* that pretends to give a faithful picture of everything within its field of view. It declares that the picture registered by it is the only one that could possibly have been taken. It forgets to remember that it could only record the fact that was within its field of view, while its sensitive plate was exposed to the light. It forgets to remember that all the smirks and grimaces of its subject were enacted while the operator was in his darkened room

preparing for the particular sitting which is to be represented for preservation.

Circumstances bear the same relation to the facts that the sensitive plate does to the picture, they do not of necessity reveal the manipulator or the pictures that might have been taken if the operator had been disposed to record them.

John Ashton had often stood before twelve of his peers and argued the cause of facts and their relation to circumstances, but never until now did he fully realize that circumstances and surroundings were capable of perverting the real facts and truths of the world, of history, of nations, of States, of society, of families, of home, of self, and belie the man in relation to his dearest interests, best impulses, and better nature.

The glamour of circumstances and surroundings is the gilded saloon of life. The naked facts are the dregs at the bottom of the cup. The soft, sweet melody of music floats joyously on summer zephyrs, and every note is wafted on wings of peace and happiness and love. These are but the trappings, the tinsel show. The truth is as often an unceasing moan. A buried hope, a blighted love, a "might have been."

"We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

On many a fair face life mantles in crimson every dimple as with joy, while the heart may be crushed and bleeding

from unmitigated and unmitigating sorrow. Be calm then, John Ashton, you are not alone in this world of misery. Be calm, all ye who suffer behind prison bars, because circumstances have belied the facts. Be calm, all ye who stand on the scaffold, because your fellows have played you off against a shadow, a trick, a sound from the abyss.

There are those whose souls have beaten with tireless wings against invisible bars until hot, burning tears have fretted and scarred as with fire the once roseate cheeks, until all smiles and joy and hope have fled and nothing is left but the foam upon the maniac's lips. There are other hearts that lie cringing and broken beneath crushing and brutalizing customs and laws that have for two hundred years been dead letters upon nature's statute books. More senseless, more cruel, more brutalizing because those who suffer are conscious that they are weaving chains for others, building scaffolds, erecting unholy shrines, cruel altars upon which will be slaughtered whole hecatombs of human hearts to inhuman molochs.

These cages for thought, builded by thought, are far more exasperating and degrading than all the prisons built by men wherein to incarcerate men. These customs so ingrained into humanity stand for the semblance of truth, justice, and liberty to that extent that whoever has the hardihood to dispute their claims is held up to execration and infamy, and looked upon as

"Too infamous to have a friend,
Too bad for bad men to commend,

Or good to name; beneath whose weight
Earth groans, who hath been spared by fate
Only to show on mercy's plan,
How far and long God bears with man."

Be calm, for the world will yet learn that nothing that attempts to keep out thought is safe from thought. Be calm, for defensive customs, though heaven-sanctioned they may be, purporting to come from God, will one day lose hold on God.

CHAPTER IV

"Our joys are a shadow and the supreme smile belongs to God."

A MOTION for a new trial was overruled. The court of last resort said there was no error. Justice was satisfied. Sentence was pronounced. Executive clemency was invoked and denied. In four months John Ashton was to be judicially murdered.

He announced through his counsel that he would take his last leave of his friends at the bar, whose forum he had so often graced. That he would part with them as a man. That he would see none of them in a felon's cell, for felon he was none.

CHAPTER V

"'Tis liberty alone which gives the flower
Of fleeting life its luster and perfume,
And we are weeds without it."

JUDGE BULLION, senior member of the law firm of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion, was, as man, lawyer, and judge, clear cut as a cameo. Above the medium size and build, imposing, captivating in manner and appearance, massive, bold, brainy, fearless, and aggressive. His attainments were many-sided. He was, in fact, a versatile man — scholarly, a lover of music, versed in science, literature, at home outside of his profession as well as in it. He was far-sighted, keen-sighted, cool, calculating, a student of men as well as of books, quick in thought, rapid in reasoning, impulsive where his passions were aroused and interested. Always on the alert for the vantage ground, which he took possession of on the first opportunity and never abandoned. If forced to fight, he contested every inch of ground. If beaten, which rarely happened, it was in the last ditch. The victor was sure to find that the prize contested for was dearly purchased, and that victory was but another name for defeat.

At the age of twenty-five he decided to settle his domestic relations, and selected a partner for life. In this, as in all other thoughts, acts, and affairs, he was the same cool, de-

liberate, and thoughtful man. He was not to be caught by any trick of thought, dreamy eyes, handsome face, attainments or popularity. He had been four years at the bar, and knew what there was in power, place, and advantage. He knew equally well what it was to have the laboring oar. A woman of good family, well connected, possessed of good health, good training, scholarly, traveled, cultured, and wealthy would be easier to love and admire than one of rare beauty, attractive, captivating in person or manners only. In short, a woman who is a fortune in herself as well as in earthly possessions.

With Russell Bullion marriage was business; business, success; success, everything; and without it everything was nothing. "Thus saith the law," was his guiding star. Whither it led he never hesitated to follow. If the path led to ampler fates he never stopped to ask "whence?" or whither?" With him, the maxim about "winning fair lady" applied equally as well in capturing a vicious bull dog, in taking advantage of the glorious uncertainties of the law, as it did in affairs of the heart.

He married the only daughter of a wealthy banker. It might have been said, "My ducats and my daughter," applied, but when the law allows it and the court awards it, a lawyer is not the man, usually, to refuse it. "Let the purchaser beware," is the law of merchants. It applies equally as well in selecting a husband. If Mrs. Bullion was taken in by the transaction she never gave it away.

He at least was satisfied with his selection. If she was

not as valuable as the "great mountain of light," he knew she was not a fashion bazar, a medicine chest, or a French novel. If her ideas were not those of the average girl, it mattered not. He knew the average girl's ideas were not of her formulation, nor always to her liking, but the outgrowth of what her mother's mother had fed upon, the same that she had experienced and expected to feed her daughters upon — if she was so unfortunate as to have daughters — and as a matter of fact to bow to custom as abjectly as she would bow to fate.

In personal charms, beauty, natural endowments, acquired attainments, culture, she was the peer of Russell Bullion, and was conscious that there were points that he could not reach, up the white heights of womanhood. For all that she had been the victim of customs and prejudices. She had danced through the required number of seasons, had had crowded receptions, a great many flatterers at balls, the proper number of admirers who had thrown themselves on their knees and exposed their worthless and flunky hearts and declared that without owning her for life they could not and would not be happy. Having seen all the shallowness and tomfoolery of society she married for love, money, pride, pique, spite, jealousy, or something equally as absurd or foolish. Her entrance into society was accompanied with a certain amount of flourish of trumpets and blowing of horns. So at her exit it was but fitting to the dropping of the curtain that there be the necessary stage thunder, Chinese lanterns, Roman candles, and other brilliancies to announce that

the last scene of the fifth act had been reached. This finished, the metamorphosing began; that is, the transformation from being something to being somebody's.

Russell Bullion's marriage was a success, of course. There was no such thing as failure where he was a party to the contract, or threw himself in as a consideration. He did not stop to discuss with himself the now much-mooted question, "Is marriage a failure?" It was enough to know that whether it was a sacrament or a contract it would make the two one, and that it would not be necessary to inquire which of the two would be the one.

It will bear repeating, Russell Bullion's marriage was a success, a gorgeous success, substantial withal. It brought him power and standing professionally, and that was wealth, and that was influence, and that was power — and that was everything. It was power to use everything to his advantage and advancement. It was power to put his foot upon the dead self of another. It was the stepping stone to his own elevation. It was power to stay her at home unkept. It was power to extract pleasure for himself and give in return nothing but pain. It was power to reproduce his kind and gratify a passion that gave him nothing but delight unalloyed with pain, but entailed upon her momentus consequences that put her life in the single throw of the dice with an even chance of losing it, that trammeled up with its surcease all that there is in life the sublimest and holiest, strongest and gentlest, that involved a life and death struggle, that stamped on her brow a new and shining name, the name that is

voiced in our first wailing cry and best becomes our latest breath; the name on earth the best, brightest, purest, loveliest — mother. O mother, mother, mother, a similarity of sweetest symphony, lisped in whatsoever tongue God-given, God-blest, and God-redeemed.

CHAPTER VI

"We ne'er are angels till our passions die."

THE junior member of the law firm of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion was born the very day Judge Bullion was twenty-six. Mrs. Bullion was then a bright, beautiful, cultured, and charming woman of twenty-one. A decided blonde. The contrast between her and Judge Bullion was as striking as it was agreeable to look upon. Their extremes in appearance, he dark, strong, and even swarthy; she fair, agile, and elastic — true as steel that could spring again and thrust — created a wide, wide world of difference in temperament, feeling, and thought.

She had passed through her grub state of girlhood, and had reached the full and rounded measure of womanhood. Her grub state did not develop her into a mere butterfly, but transformed her into that clear, calm, crystalized state of being that can be reached only through feeling, the true basis of all thought, the bed-rock of humanity.

She had taken this responsibility upon herself after mature deliberation, forethought and reflection. She knew there was pain, danger, anxiety, fears within and foes without. She knew that the helpless, throbbing pulsation at her bosom, as she held it close and closer and daily felt it increasing in life and strength, was developing its dumb, speechless tentacle into a mouth, that as soon as the budding

rose began to put forth its appearance the thorn would be there. She knew the pain of milk-teeth at her breast was only the forerunner of deeper emotions and pains.

But she was not the woman to bite back the pain in self-scorn, self-rebuke, and self-reproach, for she had been prompted by higher, purer, and better feeling, an inspiration that makes martyrs, the beauty of self-sacrifice, that carries with it its own reward. She knew that those who lay down the greatest load of selfishness thus make room in their hearts for the greatest amount of good.

The two years that Mrs. Russell Bullion spent in the care and education of her daughter were years spent in a labor of love. These years had found her in a large measure alone. They had given her husband the freedom of society.

He was young, handsome, and brilliant. Just such a man as society delights to honor. Such a man as it accords and encourages in unlimited freedom. His very position of husband and father makes him an object of especial interest to both maid and matron. It is admissible to pay him so many attentions, little courtesies that are not allowable to single gentlemen. It is so tempting to stand far out on the jutting crags where yawning gulfs roll below. It is so ex-hilarating to gather flowers that grow just over the edge of the awful abyss. The gentle pressure of the hand, the melting glance of the eye that of right belongs to another is very dear because it partakes of the smack and relish of stolen fruit. The otherwise insipid is "just too awfully nice" if it is only wicked.

It was thus that Russell Bullion had opened up to him new fields unthought of by him before. It was seductive because it was dangerous. Was he to blame? Was it not natural? Did he ordain it so? Did not the unwritten law of society so decree?

If his marriage had brought him nothing but pleasure and his wife all the pain, danger, and responsibilities, was he to be held to account for it? Hardly. Was it not self-imposed? Was it not that sort of pain that made her forgetful of it?

Yes, her solitude was of her own seeking, voluntary, it brought her a new life. Her absence from society was self-denial of the highest type. It brought her face to face with the open-doored brightness of the infinite. While the waiting and foreboding such only as the prospective mother can know, while the cares of motherhood were chasing the bloom from her cheeks, he was learning to bring out all the warmth and glow that his presence and power aroused in the moths of society that flitted around his brilliancy.

When Julia was old enough for Mrs. Bullion to again take her place in society by her husband's side she found all things changed. She was not to be flattered and courted. She had been through all that. To use the exact legal language of her husband she was now "off the docket, dismissed, costs paid, no record."

Henceforth she was to be only the stepping stone to her dear husband's advancement. She was safe. She must be content with the remarks, "Why, how you have changed,"

"You really look ten years older than when I last saw you," "How is the dear baby?" and a thousand other questions that only serve as a gentle reminder that she was simply the wife of Russell Bullion.

He floats in the dreamy waltz, the observed of all observers, while she is simply married. No man thinks of her, dares extend her the attentions that would be admissible if she had not been a wife and mother. If it were admissible the bloom would again come back to her cheek, the blood tingle in her veins, and her grace, beauty, wit, and culture make her the much sought-after, and Russell Bullion would again be compelled to enter the tournament as a contestant for the prize, to find many a staunch foeman worthy his steel, and she would be beautiful always with danger's sweetness round her.

How often do talented and charming women feel this blighting, this withering curse laying its heavy hand upon them! How often they learn when too late that to be thus unkept is to be shelved, tabooed as "somebody's!" But we are told that divinity has shaped her end thus, and hew it how she may, it must forever remain the same.

CHAPTER VII

"Narrow
"The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that weaves, the spirit that creates,
One object and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity."

IT was early both in years and in practice that Russell Bullion had been elevated to the bench. His nomination and election had been brought about and consummated by a coterie of little minds, that strive after consistency; that attempt to believe a lie for a lifetime rather than appear inconsistent for a single moment. The peculiar characteristic of the aforesaid little mind consists in that order of mental vision, that sees almost as far into the future as it can look back into the past. These judicial statesmen who believed in their inner consciousness, as they argued upon the "thingness of which," the "nearness of where," that they were the people, and that when they died all wisdom of selecting and detecting judicial mind was liable to die with them. They pushed his claims of peculiar fitness and adaptability upon various grounds; it was not only his ability, learning, and training, coupled with high character and social standing that made him such an available and much-to-be-sought-after candidate, but his freedom from prejudice and bias so likely to be developed in any man by years of practice. They argued that he would be free from that per-

nicious nature of the craft, so often seen on the bench; that he would not be arguing one or the other side, because nettled by aggressive counsel, with all the dexterity of an advocate, while affecting the impartiality of the judge. They affected to believe that if a lawyer could be selected young enough, who knew the law and had sufficient experience to be familiar with practice, who had not as yet acquired the guile and gall of the aged sinner in the profession, they would thereby achieve "the consummation devoutly to be wished." They had not stopped to consider the atmosphere that had from his first induction into these ancient mysteries surrounded the student of this divine thing called "The Law." They had forgotten to remember the atmosphere in which our whole social system is bathed as the earth is immersed in the ethereal blue. They had forgotten that all of us have been subject to the law of society; wherein one of the contracting parties, responsible for our being is by the nature of the contract, *nil:* when the bargain is consummated; that all the usages, customs, precedents, books, even from the horn-book of the profession to its last reported cases, are based upon the theory that the king—society—can do no wrong; that when two beings become one that he is the *one*. These same judicial philosophers shut their eyes to the fact that appetite increases by the thing it feeds upon; they continue to talk about the shyster and dishonest lawyer and the noble and upright judge; to them the one is but the common crockery; the other the porcelain of humanity.

If the precise spot does exist where the rascally and scoundrelly practice of the lawyer is transformed into nobility and uprightness in the judge, it has not as yet been located on the map of natural or legal geography. If there is such a thing as a change from the wicked lawyer to the upright and righteous judge; the change is equivalent to that of the change in the leopard's spots, when he gets up from one spot and lies down in another. That is the divinity of the law; that is the sort of divine thing that we dare not look into, or puncture with one of those little crooked things that asks questions. That's the "love, serve, and obey," the chain whose links lead back and bind us to the corpse of the dead past.

Judge Bullion was content to follow the beaten and broad highway of legal precedent. He had good authority outside of Blackstone. He followed the spirit of that brilliant luminary whose burning eloquence lighted up Mar's Hill more than eighteen hundred years ago; that filled the wondering Athenian with more of wonder than all the strange things he ever beheld — gorgeous, luminous eloquence that still shines, a consuming fire, long after the glory of Greece has crumbled into indistinguishable decay. He was in full accord with that renowned enthusiast, who had so much and such profound respect for the law that it was only when a light shone round about him from heaven that he ceased to say, "If your honor please." So strong was his love for precedents, that the blinding light at mid-day did not dispel all his legal nature, for he wielded that glittering two-edged

sword of the law with such consummate power, brilliancy, and convincing might, that even the king said, "This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar." But he would not. So completely was he wedded to the power of precedents, so thoroughly imbued with its doctrines, that he preferred saving exceptions, that he might go up to Cæsar, to the preparing of souls that they might go in peace to the shining courts of Omnipotence.

When thousands of glittering gems that had fallen from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, might have been repeated to the churches under his ministration, for their comfort and their hope; when the story of His love whose "blessed" hands and feet were nailed for their advantage to the bitter cross, might have been poured into their ears like music from his tongue, his penchant for precedent got the better of his inspiration, and he talked of that which he knew absolutely nothing, and true to the nature of ignorance, hurled an insult at the heads of one-half his congregation, "Wives obey your husbands."

Is it, then, any cause of wonderment that the earth yet groans beneath the colossal burdens of customs, precedents, and prejudices, when men still bow to them as they bow to fate?

CHAPTER VIII

"Beautiful as a wreck of paradise,"

BUT for the "somebodys" Mrs. Bullion would have been an entity in the world of thought and activity. She would have gone forth into the world, in natural advantages, in thought, feeling, and tender sympathies the superior of any man. Her motherhood had unsealed the fountains of her heart, and she would have been in unison with all the noble sentiments of suffering humanity. From being the queen of solitude she would have emerged the queen of society. But the blight and mildew of custom and precedent were upon that house. She could do nothing but dream and dote; waste her energies in beholding the growth and beauty of her child, and have her joy and happiness balanced against the thought that she too would one day be played off against the lust and desire of a man's ownership and passion.

Judge Bullion's time was taken up between his growing ambition and his duty on the bench. She saw but little of him and his companionship was less. It was not the cares of the noble Brutus that enforced this separation. No, if it had been a "Noble Brutus" she could have been another "Portia." If it be true, that,

"The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring,"

none could have been tenderer; none could have been braver or gone before her in true daring. No, she had been caught in the trap sprung by society. In the language of precedent, she had been guilty of an estopple; that is, she had been silent when she might have spoken, and now that she would speak she must remain forever silent. It is only man's prerogative to cry aloud and spare not. It was not the pains of child-bearing; it was not the tender solicitude and wakeful hours that had left hard lines of care on her brow; that had changed her golden crown to silver gray. It was the galling bitterness of the ripened fruit that she had plucked, that now was wasted ashes on her lips. While she rocked the cradle of the child of their two bodies, he with tender solicitude watched over the child of his intellect —a new book on "Marriage and Divorce"—significant title!

To prepare this for the press was a laborious task. He advertised for an amenuensis. He found one in the person of a young lady stenographer, young, beautiful, and accomplished. How passing strange that so much of this world has been created for man's sole use, behoof, and benefit!

None but those who have had the blessed experience can appreciate how a married man would be aided and abetted in such a work by such an addition to his working capacity; how the sunshine of a handsome young lady would illumine musty pages of precedents; how cheery words, vivacious, and lively manners would smooth out the ruffled temper of an over-worked judge; how deft fingers, swift in execution, would push the labor; how much more he could

endure in research; how much easier it would be to remain until the "wee small hours" in his office in the drudgery of pouring over ancient volumes of forgotten lore in company with such a congenial spirit.

The book progressed with wonderful rapidity. The interest grew in the work; it soon became a labor of love, in which two hearts as well as two heads were equally absorbed. The hours spent by the mother in watching over the cradle were followed by other hours in waiting for the judge to suspend labor and consign the child of his intellect to forgetfulness and his body to healthful sleep.

It was said long ago "that the innocent sleep." The incoherent mutterings that had in the first years of his labors on the bench sometimes fallen from his slumbering lips, such as the following: "Gentlemen of the jury." "If you find." "It is the sentence." "Motion overruled." "The case at bar." Were now changed into gentle murmurings of soft nothings, "Ethel, dear," and other protestations of love that plainly told that the noble judge was faithless to his former vows.

CHAPTER IX

"Struck by the envious wrath of man or God."

THE judge's amanuensis had been reared in the strictest school of the devotees of the marriage contract, who believed that woman was especially created for marriage and not marriage for woman. That any course that did not lead to that goal was born of sin.

She had accepted this position against the advice and warnings of friends, but work she must, for the support of an aged and invalid mother depended upon her exertions. The sum that she could earn depended upon the amount of work she did, and as she was paid extra for the additional time she was only too glad to devote her evenings to her employment and the advancement of her employer's interests. But to be alone with a man not her husband until the late hours of the night did not comport with the monkish notions of society with which she had had the misfortune to be surrounded. If she had not taken the fatal step in the acceptance of such a position in the broad light of the day, she had now given room for the breath of suspicion. If she had not as yet crossed the rubicon that divided her from the "truly good," she had waded deep into its waters. If she was not as yet guilty of any indiscretion she was already prejudged a sinner. And as many others have had the innocent ground cut from under their guileless feet and plunged

into the vortex of destruction, so she was now brought face to face with calumny, and that other hell-born, soul-destroying slander,

"Though slander, meanest spawn of hell,
And woman's slander is the worst,"

her mind so poisoned and sickened by the foul and false accusations that there was no virtue in fighting to keep the body undefiled.

Every cause must have its martyrs. So her heart was laid as an immolation upon the altar of woman's liberty, freedom, disenthrallment from that custom and precedent that says, "stand in the market overt of matrimony, not in the market where she can sell her brain-power, skill, ability, and adaptability, to do and perform work suited to her capabilities and fitness."

Be calm, woman, the day is breaking. If society would but see the wrecks upon either side of the river of destruction caused by its self-constituted censorship, it would hide its mouth in the dust, at least long enough for some poor, forsaken, blasted, blighted, ruined, sin-cursed Magdalene to say, "she that is without sin, let her first cast a stone." But society has its own peculiar ways and methods of dealing with the erring, it punishes not for being guilty but for being caught.

As the judge was not caught in this episode, society was undisturbed. But the placid bosom of the lake that is ruffled by the dropping of a pebble at its center in the quiet calm of the morning will tell its story in a ripple upon every sedgy shore in the dim twilight of evening.

Judge Bullion's murmurings of love for another in his fitful slumbers were known only to his wife, and half guessed by himself. The secret was theirs. Thoughts but to two hearts known make for each a different path; to the one an unceasing moan, to the other a diverting aftermath. The moaning of Mrs. Bullion died away in tongueless misery. She determined to live long enough to fortify the mind and heart of her child against the iniquity of a vow that had driven one woman into the everlasting sleep of death for the taking of it, and sending another into the never-ending misery of a nameless life because she had not.

What Judge Bullion gathered as the ripened fruit of such inglorious aftermath we leave to his inner conscience to evolve when stung to madness by the lash of memory as it brought in pale review two pairs of eyes; the one as calm a blue as heaven's canopy at mid-day when unruffled by cloud or storm; the other as black as midnight when the hollow heavens are hnng with inky clouds of troubled darkness. The pleading eloquence of the one that could melt to tears and pity; the piercing brightness of the other that could inspire to deeds of daring and death. Their commingled scorn and contempt shot like bolts of fierce lightning deep down into the inner depths of his soul. The golden brightness of the sunny curls was faded and tear-stained; its glory had departed; it now seemed of itself a thing apart; it floated round that once lovely face like the dull, silvery fleeces that follow the last cloud of an expiring storm, whose thunder is its own death-knell. The raven tresses that once

in their shining darkness seemed to cast a shadow over the clear white of that marble brow, now disheveled and storm-beaten, cast a glamour round that tear-distorted and grief-stricken face like the changing whiteness and darkness of low hanging clouds in the horizon, a portent to a coming fury of the elements, or standing out in lurid relief as the stormy back-ground to that face mantled in sorrow, starving for sympathy, fretted as with fire by an unrequited, a consuming love.

The ghost of a murdered Banquo shaking its gory locks and pushing him from his stool at the feast would have been but the fleeting fancies of childhood, vanishing at the dawn of manhood, compared with these phantoms that followed him day and night, that tortured his mind waking, and disturbed his dreams while sleeping. Truly, only the innocent sleep, for they alone deserve to.

CHAPTER X

"Man! thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear!"

JULIA had completed her course of study and supplemented it with the art of shorthand at the time John Ashton entered her father's law office as a student. To her, as to all others, he was a young man without a history, without a past; he knew no relatives; had no recollection of his mother; had never seen his father. He had been in strange lands; he spoke French, Italian, Spanish, and German with the ease that comes from the mother tongue. He had been in school all his life — how, by what means, at whose expense, he never knew. He had recollections of sunny skies, of oceans, seas, mountains, and rivers, strange cities, strange lands. He had in his possession, he knew not from what source, a locket of unusually large size; it contained on the one side a picture of a woman's face, exquisite in its beauty; the other side was filled with a single tress of raven black hair. He had visions fair of this face; that its owner had held him once close in her arms, had smothered him almost with frantic kisses, and bathed his face with tears. These dim shadows seemed farther off than Homer's now, because they were before the days of his school life. Before the Alps, the Mediterranean, and the blue Italian skies. These were the flashes that flitted from out the "Everlasting nay;" they were from the inane, whence? where?

whither? he could not even guess. He had recollections later on of waiking daily on the Champ Elysees with his French tutor; of seeing a singularly beautiful woman whose longing gaze struck agony and pity to his heart. Her hair was white as the driven snow. She often sat near him at the theater. Her eyes would then be constantly upon him. She took her coffee at the same *cafe* that he frequented. At such times she feasted upon his fair young face rather than that which was placed before her. She once pressed near him in the thronging multitude, grasped his hand passionately, touched his forehead with her lips, dropped a scalding tear on his cheek, and was gone forever.

These recollections had cast a shadow over his young life, and tinged his brightest moments with a sombre hue. On leaving Paris his preceptor informed him that he had been born in America; that he was then thirteen years old; that he was to return to his native land. He had been introduced to a young man, then a student, who was to accompany him to the United States.

When he arrived he was taken charge of by a preceptor of a school for boys, and was then informed that he was to complete a course preparatory to a collegiate training. Of this school for boys, Judge Bullion was a trustee. He offered a three hundred dollar prize for the best examination in modern languages at the close of Ashton's first year. "Frenchy," as the boys called him, carried off the prize. His politeness of manners, and gentlemanly instincts pleased

Judge Bullion. The man and the boy soon became fast friends. They often took long walks together.

This ripened friendship led to the judge defraying his collegiate expenses, and when that course was completed, Ashton entered the law office of his benefactor.

There was but one promise that Judge Bullion ever exacted of Ashton, and that was, never to bestow his affections without the judge's approval and consent. "The law," said the judge, "is a jealous mistress, and he who weds her must forego all other unions until thoroughly acquainted with his first spouse, and rooted and grounded in all her knowledge and principles."

Ashton and Julia were each stimulated in their acquisitions and search after legal knowledge by the other's industry. The day previous to Ashton's receiving his certificate from the hands of his preceptor, that would admit him to an examination for admission to the bar, Julia astonished her father by asking him for a like certificate admitting her to the same examination. Judge Bullion looked at her with amazement, hurled at her the law and the prophets, Saint Paul and all the other saints, but to no purpose. She heard her father through calmly, and with respectful attention and silence as was her wont. When he had finished she arose and stood before him. She drew her proud form up to its full height, looked straight into his piercing black eyes and met his firm and steady gaze and did not flinch. She crossed her hands on her back, advanced her right foot, resting her weight on her left, elevated her chin, drew her shoulders

back until every breath tossed her bosom as the heaving billows move by the power of the storm that troubles them.

Judge Bullion's face flushed with fatherly pride as he beheld her, it paled quickly at the rising storm of passion that his trained eye discerned was raging in her whole being. It was evident that she was struggling for the mastery over herself. She made one powerful effort to be calm; her every feature settled to repose; the storm heard the voice of the inward monitor "peace, be still," and it obeyed her.

With a quick movement of her right hand, as if driving away some invisible mist between her and her father, she placed it over her heart and quietly began: "Custom and precedent stayed my mother at home unkept, and crushed and fretted her proud heart until it broke. In the agony of her soul I have heard her pray that her daughter might be spared from such tyranny; that the environments of the coming generation of women might be enlarged; that the mildewed customs and cobwebs of dark and brutish estimates of life might be swept away; that the light that had come into all other dark places might yet beam in the darkened and benighted minds of the little leaders of society in relation to the sphere of women; that men might be made to believe that with more breadth and liberty she would still be pure and good; and that she might yet see the blessed hour when the breath of suspicion would not cloud her moral sky by following a vocation in life

that her powers and capabilities qualified her to do and accomplish."

She paused for a moment and then continued. "I don't ask any favors because I am a woman; but because I am a woman so fathered and so mothered, I demand the right to brush away the legal fictions and have a mental sky as clear and bright as my powers, my attainments, and ambition can make for me. I challenge you now to put my legal attainments to the test, and if I am found wanting after I have been weighed in the balance then refuse to certify that you think me competent to stand in open court for examination, but if I am, do for the love of that angel mother whose approval we both covet and hope to have, then permit me."

Judge Bullion would not have been a man, much less a father, if he had refused to give her an opportunity to satisfy him that she was fully prepared to pass such an examination. For five long hours he continued a most searching examination. The "Year-books," Blackstone, and all the English authors necessary to a full understanding of the Common Law were carefully gone over, as well as all leading American authors on all elementary subjects—pleadings, practice, and statutes She never once hesitated, she never failed, she seemed to have inherited and absorbed his own legal knowledge. He stopped, astonished, amazed, overwhelmed, and overjoyed.

A shade of sadness swept over his face, a tremor in his voice as he for the first time gave utterance to his life-long disappointment, "Julia, if you had only been a boy."

She and Ashton were examined in open court and both admitted. As they passed from the court room, at the close of the examination, the judge met them with satisfaction beaming from his eyes. "May you ever be as successful, my children." Judge Bullion had never said "my children" with so much fervor, with so much pride, so much hope.

The little ripple that had so many years before been started by the dropping of a pebble into the waters of life in the quiet calm of his morning, promised now to be balanced and counteracted, and would never be telling its story along every sedgy beach that skirted the farther shores of the afternoon of his voyage of life.

The thing that we dread and fear may come to pass is the very thing we try to argue ourselves into thinking and believing will never happen. But this looked for, this dreaded expected, ever flits across our path — its weird and fantastic form though invisible to others is a plain and palpable ghost to us — its hot breath hissing through invisible teeth declares that it will never down, will ever be ready to quench the happiness, the joy, the love, the life, of all that comes in its way.

Judge Bullion was a far-seeing man; indeed, he saw farther into the future than most men see into the past. He saw the danger, the pit-falls, the consequences that must result from an intimate association of man and woman, such as this partnership would surely bring about between such an ardent soul as Ashton possessed, or rather that possessed him, and a lovely and attractive woman such as his daughter

was. He had set his heart upon her marriage with a distant relative, still the only and nearest of kin of the name and family of Bullion.

Fred Bullion, in manners, person, and intellect was clearly of his distant uncle's make-up. He was young, handsome, and withal, wealthy, and as much in love with Julia as his uncle was with his plans and wishes for his daughter's future. The judge had declared his wishes to his daughter, had in so many words told her that it was his firm resolve that all his estate should go to Fred if he survived him, and if she expected to be benefited by his will it must be as the wife of Fred Bullion. The judge was Fred's *quasi* father, legal adviser, and was interested in a great many enterprises with him. This made him a constant and welcome visitor both at home and office. The judge had used all a man's blundering attempts at tact, or rather lack of it, and all his would-be-talent in having his daughter see the propriety and eternal fitness of things in uniting her hand, heart, and fortunes with Fred. He had reasoned as a man, talked as a father, argued as a lawyer, and finally as judge had "adjudged, ordered, and decreed" that it must be so.

Fred had so much confidence in the ability of the father to bring about all that he had decreed that he gave more attention to money making than love making. In his own mind he had said there was no need of spending time on a "sure thing." Judge Bullion however had some little romance in his soul, and it seemed quite the proper thing that

Fred should press his own claim for the hand of such a woman as Julia, and was considerably nettled at Fred's seeming indifference. The judge therefore bethought himself of the best method to make Fred appreciate the importance of acting, and cause him to realize that delays are dangerous in love affairs as well as in business, politics, and religion. He accordingly took the necessary steps to compass his desired ends. He invited Dr. Arlington to call at the office as a professional expert; he had him subpœnæd in all important cases where he could be of any service. He contrived in every possible way to have Fred see Dr. Arlington in company with Julia. He was jubilant to see how effective his methods had been, how exactly he had calculated. That nothing is so much appreciated, no loveliness so lovely, as when by danger's sweetness and loveliness surrounded.

Still another cause had intensified Fred's desire to bring things to a speedy termination. He had need of ready money that he knew would go with Julia's hand. These combinations with Ashton in the background and Dr. Arlington coming in for his share of attention caused him to come to a realizing sense of his position. He threw himself into the breach; he was surprised, pained, and dismayed when his overtures were coolly repelled by the object of his desires.

Like a man attacked in the dark, he felt himself fighting at a frightful disadvantage; for he knew not where or in what direction to aim his blows; his courage was at a

discount, owing to the lack of certain knowledge he possessed of the number of his assailants; uncertainty ever giving a wide range to the probabilities against him.

Dr. Arlington was a brilliant and rising young physician, of engaging manners, cultured and prepossessing, of good family, enjoying a good practice, and would inherit an immense fortune. He was certainly a formidable rival. And what of Ashton? He, too, now for the first time loomed up in Fred Bullion's pathway as he had never before done. "What a fool not to have seen the danger that surrounded me," thought Fred. "He, the partner in her business; the associate in life's fiercest combats; the sharer in her toils; her leader in battles hotly contested; a participant in her victories; the strong arm that buffets every wave in rescuing the legally shipwrecked; the rear guard never dismayed; covering defeat and battling back a victorious foe." Surely, here was danger, here was suspense, more straining on heart and soul than certain knowledge of ruin. This was the perturbed state of mind Fred Bullion found himself in at the date of Dr. Arlington's tragic and unexpected taking-off.

CHAPTER XI

"What's done we may partly compute,
But know not what's resisted."

JULIA had several interviews with Ashton in the court room while the trial was in progress, but never at the jail. She, with the other members of the bar, took her last leave of him in the court room at the time sentence was pronounced.

She had previous to this time arranged with the sheriff to supply him with such books and papers as he might wish to read. She was also granted the privilege of sending him a fresh boquet of flowers every morning.

All books and papers were carefully inspected on being admitted to his cell, also on being removed. This prevented any correspondence from being carried on between them. It was better thus, for thoughts exchanged do not lighten burdens when the burdens must be separately borne.

Julia Bullion was no drivelling sentimentalist; she was too good a lawyer for that; she had too much experience with judgments and decrees to repine or hope for fate or fortune to alter them.

She bowed submissively, shook off the lingering, forlorn hope, and set herself resolutely at work to prepare herself against the shock of doom that awaited Ashton and herself.

The awful tragedy that had been enacted at the office

of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion on that fatal November afternoon had made it a place of dread and darkness not to be habitable by men. They had therefore removed their entire office and libraries to the residence of the Bullions.

The Judge was completely prostrated by the murder and consequent trial, conviction and sentence of his partner. To him, Ashton was as dear as the apple of his eye. He could not believe him guilty, and the thoughts of his execution completely overcome him. He could not sufficiently recover from the shock to attend to business, and confined himself to his private apartments and refused to see his most intimate friends. Julia alone was admitted to his presence and administered to his every wants.

She was a woman, tall, stately, and of commanding presence. Her hair was brown, just lighted with enough of her mother's golden curls to make it appear as though the sun was about to break through its heavy, waving tresses. It was brushed back from her brow and caught in a Grecian twist low on the back of her head. Her forehead was not high, but broad and clear white, pensive, not gloomy, but thoughtful; and sometimes sad. Her brows were darker than her hair and slightly curved, giving enough archness to harmonize with her forehead and lower parts of her face. Her eyes, in color, were dark brown, of a bluish tint in repose, but deep black when their possessor was in earnest; wide apart, very full, and had that liquid brightness that made the observer feel that they were about to laugh with joy or weep with grief. Her lashes were long and very black, such as

one rarely sees other than in childhood. Her nose was of the Grecian type, with full nostrils that seemed as sensitive to emotion as down to zephyr. Her mouth and chin were of exquisite mould; the lower jaw was strong and firm set, in exact accord with her forehead. Her lips were sharply defined at the edges, full enough for intellectuality, and closed with resolute firmness over teeth of beautiful, ivory whiteness, clean and shapely. Her complexion was that of the pronounced blonde, touched with roseate tints that added to its freshness and healthy glow. Her form was perfection itself, lithe and willowy; her carriage at once easy and graceful, yet dignified withal, and that, too, without affectation. Her habits of dress were very simple; she needed no art to complete her make-up.

The easiest way to get rid of our load of grief is to help others carry their burdens; so thought Julia, and the morning after Ashton had been brought for the last time in the presence of the court she started out on her mission of love. She had no fixed route, but an objective point that she had determined to make, and that at all hazards. Her plans were all matured; she was ready for action.

As she left that palatial mansion and walked down the driveway that led out to the side gate she traced her way in the middle of the broad, smooth, level road, now strewn with November leaves; and she could not but look at them and think of how so many times she had in her childhood gathered October's scarlet leaves; how joyous then; how free her heart had been; how she had searched for the

brightest tints; she trampled them carelessly under foot now; their very brightness seemed to suggest that they were stained with blood.

When she reached the street she could not resist the temptation to look back over the now-neglected lawn and shrubbery; to cast one glance at her own windows with their half drawn curtains; and the closed blinds that shut out the sunshine from the room that Ashton had for ten years occupied. She felt her purpose slipping from her; she gave but one longing, loving glance, closed her eyes, set her teeth hard, clenched her hands, and in the words of Lady Macbeth, "Infirm of purpose," nerved herself for the work she had mapped out for herself. What woman had been able to accomplish in a wicked resolve could not she do in the paths of honor and right. With this high and firm resolve of purpose she set her face as with flint against her emotions and walked slowly down the street. She directed her course toward that portion of the city where she was most likely to meet with want, pinched faces, tattered garments, rags, and filth.

She had been one of the original promoters of the open air fund for the purpose of giving the hopelessly poor of the tenement houses a few weeks of sunshine and fresh air during the hot summer months. She had always felt an interest in that class of unfortunates and knew just where to find the miserably poor. She was familiar with the street gamin plying his art, gliding softly into open boxes, garbage pits, picking up stray bones, half decayed vegetables, and spoiled

fruits. She was familiar with him in after years standing at the bar wherein justice is done; with hard look, sullen and sin-polluted features, gazing into the dark and dismal future, heartless, hopeless, friendless, waiting for the open doors of the prison to close behind him and hide him forever in a living tomb.

As she turned off the busy, bustling thoroughfare on to a side street whose foot rested on the wharf at the side of old ocean, she noticed the difference in appearance, not only in the street, buildings, teams, wagons, but faces of men and boys; from the scene all hurry and push to the one all stagnation and enforced idleness.

In front of a two-story frame building on the opposite side of the street was gathered quite a crowd of men and boys. An aged and creaky sign swung from over the door. It had the regulation straight upon it of the vicinity, and no mistake. A beer glass filled to over-flowing, "A schooner and one hard-boiled egg for five cents." There was an outside flight of stairs. A board tacked against the corner of the building and projecting out far enough so as to give place for a sign had scrawled upon it, "Ladies Entrance, Up-Stairs."

The crowd on the walk seemed good natured, and were holding a sort of out-door debating society. A tall, brawny fellow, probably forty, was standing with his back against the side of the building, between the two windows on the side of the door nearest to the stairs. He wore a much-faded Scotch cap, some half dozen sizes too small, that hung on

the back of his head; his dark curly hair was sadly neglected and gave indications that he might be an iron worker or had been exposed to out-door labor. His coat, originally of blue, was faded, rust covered and in rags. Vest he had none, and the remnant of his shirt and pantaloons seemed to have been in service long before he became the wearer of the coat. His whiskers, of a dark brown, were cropped close to his face, and despite the hard, dingy appearance they lent their owner, he was still a marked and striking man.

As Julia neared the crossing on the opposite side of the street she had a feeling akin to sympathy for that tattered and woe-begone crowd. She stopped; something said "What have you in common with that crowd of hoodlums?" The answer was ready in her mind, "Misery." Yes, that word has made the world of struggling, suffering men brothers; banded them together as with hoops of steel; and made each individual heartache, and pain, and groan, and tears, the common cause of all, until it has gained battles, and oganized governments, established laws and conquered a just, lasting and honorable peace, with happiness and plenty. Without further controversy with herself she crossed the street.

As she drew near, the crowd that had taken up the entire way moved as with one common consent close to the building to make room for her to pass. She slackened her pace as she drew near, she new not why, she had no thought of stopping, yet she felt that she could not go by. Her practiced eyes and mind began to cast about for some ex-

pedient. She noticed the upper sign, "Ladies Entrance," she cast a glance at the upper window; the shutters had at that moment been thrown open at the corner window nearest the stairs and a woman's face half concealed by her falling hair and drawn curtain, which she pressed close against her cheek, concealed her features so that her most intimate friend could not have recognized her.

Julia took in the situation at once; she had been recognized by this woman from the time that she had stopped on the opposite corner. Had her feeling to join the motley crowd been divined by the woman above? She was now almost at the foot of the stairs; would she go by? if she did she would lose her opportunity to do something, to fulfill a yearning desire that had forced her to leave her elegant home and go in unfamiliar and wicked portions of one of America's great metropolitan fields of sin and shame. She felt the woman's beaming eyes upon her; she glanced up; it was her last chance; their eyes met, was it recognition? She had formed the resolution, and that meant performance with her. She suited the action to the word, and the next moment found her climbing the stairs. Open-mouthed wonder was written in every face in that gaping crowd, but there were no leers, jeers, or ogling; all of them were simply awe-struck and dumb. Such a woman in such a place, was written on every face. They looked from one to the other. "She knew the place," seemed to be about the conclusion they arrived at finally. Then, as if impressed with holy awe, with one accord they tacitly agreed, that angels do come earthward as of old.

She was on the landing above; the door opened before she could lift the latch. She stepped inside with a feeling of relief. No two women ever faced each other with more amazement and surprise. The one in loose wrapper was the first to speak. "Oh, Julia! how could you?" Julia extended her hand. The other folded her arms across her heaving breast and shrank back as though she herself was pollution; her face ashy pale and almost gasping for breath. When she had sufficiently composed herself that she dared to trust herself to speak — in words stifled with emotion — she broke forth, "Don't come near me, don't touch me." She made a motion with her hand and eyes, directing Julia to a seat on a sofa, her arms still tightly folded on her heaving bosom. Julia did as she was directed and sank, rather than sat, on the sofa. Her quick mind took in the situation at a glance. As she looked at the woman still standing as if rooted to the floor, hot tears chased others down her cheeks in rapid succession.

"Tears! what are tears? The babe weeps in its cot,
The mother singing; at her marriage bell
The bride weeps; and before the oracle
Of high-famed hills, the poet has forgot
Such moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for grace.

Ye who weep only! If, as some have done,
Ye grope tear-blinded in a desert place,
And touch but tombs look up! Those tears will run
Soon in long rivers down the lifted face,
And leave the vision clear for stars and sun."

The nameless woman's eyes were dry as flint; the foun-

tain of her tears was as a cloud that had outwept its rain; her tears had been scorched and consumed long ago by the fierce fires of her burning shame and all-devouring grief.

It was the meeting across the chasm of the awful abyss, from whose endless deeps there arose the recollections of tears, and groans, and heartaches, the dust and ashes of the burnt-out chambers of the mind and soul; the fierce fires of an all-consuming pain, not of fleshy heart, not of body, but of mind; before which the pains of the rack, the thumb-screw, the whip, the cross, the scourge, the stake, pale into nothingness and insignificance. It was the invisible ineffable, devouring flame, not of conscience, but of consciousness, that notice which the mind takes of itself. Not enlightened conscience, that grows, expands, enlarges, quickens and leaps up into a living fire to light the paths of truth, virtue, and goodness, but that relict of barbarism that befogs, bewilders, that tortures, that belabors with fiendish delight; that night-mare that weighs down and depresses; that undefinable dread that sees an enemy in every blade of grass; that turns away from every budding flower; that is mocked by every spotless animated or inanimated object; that turns the mind into a mirror to show its own spots and blemishes and infamy. Not the consciousness of guilt, but the consciousness of dread. Oh, that terrible thing, that ghost of a woman's ideal confronting her! That legal fiction that declares that the contact, that the union of mind and body of the man and woman to be a crime, unless that crime be changed into an act of holy sanction by being continued for

life! Hideous doctrine, monstrous, and all the more so because it is backed by custom, prejudice, and precedent that lays hold on God.

The whole life of that fallen woman seemed shrieking in her mind, struggling to be heard, to be recounted. She turned and closed the door for fear the very air would proclaim it to the world. Her first thought, feeling was, "have you come to trouble us before our time; have you come to mock us with your purity; have you come to make us feel how terribly we are fallen?"

"Both guns and swords are strong, no doubt,
And so are tongue and pen;
And so are sheaves of good bank notes,
To sway the souls of men;
But guns, and swords, and gold, and thought,
Though mighty in their sphere,
Are sometimes feebler than a smile,
And poorer than a tear."

Julia's tears had been more eloquent than words, "had pleaded like angels, trumpet tongued," had swept away all barriers. The past was spread out before them both as a corpse of some loved one, dear to each heart. Their recollections of tenderness and love clasped hands over the abyss; if there had been any prudery, any of the "holier than thou" feeling floating in that atmosphere it soon found that there was no place for it in either woman's heart, and it skulked away and hid itself in the gloom of sombre, self-satisfied, pretentiousness. They two were girls again. Both their hearts had been crushed by great sorrow, they were

now sisters on the level plain of strong feeling that knows no superior, that recognizes all the world as kin.

"Mary!" If that word had come from the speechless lips of the voiceless dead, from the tongueless past, it could not have so startled her. It brought back the far-off memory of her childhood, nameless evermore. Its notes filled her, thrilled her, as with the rushing flood of years; like the billowy waves of old ocean drawn thither by the far-off subtle influences of the pale-faced moon; so now her feelings piled and heaped against the whited sepulchre of her ruined and wasted life and rolled far out into the shoreless eternity, blackened and gathering blackness evermore from infinite gloom, sombre memories, and hopeless despair. No light, no hope, no peace; it was the wail from the abyss, from the unreplying lips of a grief-stricken mother; it went moaning ever down the long, deep corridors of infinite misery, "Mary!" "Mary!" "Mary!"

At the sound of that name the grief-stricken woman had fallen prostrate at Julia's feet. Mingled with her sobs, she cried, "O take me home to my mother." Mother, enchanted name! Mother, *dead*, because forsooth, Mary's love for another had not been labeled "married."

The great deeps of their woman's natures were now broken up and flowed together in mingled tears. Julia raised her up gently and held her against her bosom until her sobs and tears had spent their force and cleared her vision for stars and sun. It was such a sight as the canting, hypocritical world might have viewed with infinite benefit. If this one

pure and good woman was not defiled with the touch of her fallen sister, why then society must needs gather up its angelic robes and rush by the fallen and ruined and sin-cursed?

That sobbing bundle of misery, once a child, once a woman; now a black and festering interrogation point, that constantly asked a burning question; that had a beginning in the past; filled the present; and projected itself into the future like concentrated gloom into bright light — thus she began — "I was so happy then, he —" Oh, that mystic word! It stands at the threshold of woman's opening life; darkens every passage-way; illumines every untried path; besmirches every bright picture; despoils every virtue; and writes pain and misery on every page of her life; and stands at the end of every thought as the outstretched cross upon which is crucified her hope, her happiness, her love, her life — "he was so noble, so good, so true, so heroically grand, my hope, my light, my love, my Harry. He was denied the house. I was told that I must not see him; he was not of our class. He despised 'clandestine,' he abhorred 'elope.' He was the soul of honor. He would see my father. He would claim his own from him. I begged, I entreated, I implored. I knew my father, he did not. I saw him coming down the front gravel walk from my window. I heard father storming in the hall. The moment Harry put his hand on the bell-knob the door opened before he had time to pull the bell. Without a second's warning and father had dealt him a murderous blow in the face. He rolled

down the stone steps in a heap, and before he could collect his senses; before he could regain his feet, he was covered with blows and kicks by my enraged father. Why? Not because he loved me so much as because I loved him. I screamed. Father left him and turned his attention to me."

She covered her face with her hands, as if trying to shield her eyes from the memory of that scene, to drive away the recollection of that moment and what followed.

"Father rushed into the hall, closed the door behind him, and mounted the stairs; I met him on the landing above; his face was livid with rage and passion. I lifted both my hands; I shrieked, kill me as you have murdered my hope! my life!" She gasped, choked, struggled, struck out with one hand as if for battle, and held up the other as if for defense. "He did all that I asked of him and more; he murdered my mind, despoiled my soul, blackened my virtue, and chastity and purity, and hung them as a dead corpse about my living neck of this suffering body."

Her hands clutched convulsively in her paroxysm of grief as if feeling for that other, better, dearer dead self. "O why did he say it?" "If I could only efface that word from my soul; if I could only cease to feel its very burnings every day gnawing deeper and deeper into my mind."

"O how I have struggled against its every letter. I have bathed that 'w' with tears until I thought it had been washed away. I have covered that 'h' with the dust and ashes of dear Harry's life blood. I have blotted that 'o' with the ceaseless moan from then until now. I have piled

on that 'r' all the rage, and revenge, and pride of my soul. I have hidden that 'e' with everlasting sorrow, and flung over the whole, the ensanguined years of my life and heart's blood; and through it all, it shrieks, and screams, and howls, and moans."

"He pushed me rudely back into my room as he uttered that awful word. I had met him as innocent as when first I lay upon my mother's white bosom an unconscious babe. I sank down on the floor of my room; the other awful thing he had transformed me into by that frightful, uncalled for, undeserved, untruthful, unfatherly, and awful imprecation; and not all the rain in the sweet heavens can again make my mind and soul as white as snow."

"O that frightful question-mark that forever links the bright inane of the past with the black inane of the future. Why? why? why?"

The storm had spent its force; she lay in Julia's arms, limp, helpless, and almost lifeless, like the child that has been rescued from the jaws of a wild beast. It was the first time in all these years that she had had an opportunity to vindicate herself before the august tribunal of an unsullied woman's presence.

Because woman fears woman as she does not fear God, makes woman unto woman law; for what is law but fear? She felt from the loving, tender embrace of Julia's strong, sympathetic arms the nature of the verdict; there was no need to wait for that cant of conspirators to pronounce *pro forma*, "not guilty." She looked up into Julia's face, both

women half smiled through their tears. "How like mother's arms yours feel." She arose, drew an ottoman near Julia's feet, and with a look of infinite longing that meant, "Can I," waited for permission that came instantly from sympathetic eyes, "Yes, if you want to."

It is not often that the world stops long enough to hear the story of a prejudged and precondemned woman; will it listen now? If not, close this book and pronounce the anathema upon both book and author.

"It was more than three months before I had an opportunity to have a word with Harry. I could not write him, I could not tell him how I had been treated; but I did tell him that I must flee from that unholy place. His look was one of mingled hope, joy, and sadness. He made the necessary arrangements, furnished me a room in a secluded and quiet part of the city. I stole out my best apparel and a few needed things, and in the early night of June, when a heavy rain was falling, called a cab and went to the place designated by Harry. In order that I might not be followed and traced by my father, I had quietly removed my trunk to the house of a friend and the cabman had taken me from there to my destination, dressed in a suit of Harry's clothes."

"At the appointed hour, Harry came; it was bitter-sweet; it was heaven seasoned with sulphurous rifts. It was a strange commingling of life and death. It was hope blackened with despair. I told him everything. I told him of that awful accusation. He arose and with clenched hands vowed vengeance. While I was horror-stricken, I gloated

over the thought of vengeance even against my own father. He held me long in his tender embrace; he moiled my face with many clinging kisses and tears. It was so sweet, so full of despair. I continued thus for some three months, suspended between hope and dread, until one night in the latter part of September a fierce bang at the door startled me; it was followed by the heavy weight of an officer thrown against it, and in he strode, my father behind him.

He rushed by the officer the moment that he caught sight of me, placed his hands rudely on my shoulders and looked fiercely, savagely in my face, and demanded of me the keys to my room; the whereabouts of my destroyer. I looked him calmly, and coolly, in the face; I felt no terrors then; I said in words as unconcernedly as I ever addressed him, 'my keys are in the drawer there, and my destroyer now has his hands upon my shoulders.' 'Liar' hissed through his firm set teeth, his hot breath fairly scorching my cheek. My only reply, 'be it so, then.'"

"He relaxed his hold; bade me get the keys, ordered the officer to take me in charge. We three then left the room. My father stopped to make some investigation; I asked the officer's permission to join him. He complied with my request. I ascended to the room that we had just left, it being on the second floor of the building; saw my father rummaging through my trunk. I slipped by the door, passed down the back way, out the side gate into the alley, and ran to a house in the near neighborhood; the occupants I had come to know; and in five minutes was on my way to the depot."

"Harry, fortunately, had supplied me with money that day; and I took the first train for C—. The people whose acquaintance I had made had furnished me the necessary information and directions so minutely that I was enabled to find the location in the city of C—. without making any inquiry and unobserved. I knew nothing of the character of the house they had directed me to, all I knew was that it was a nice quiet place. I was asked if I would 'see company,' or would I board?" It seemed all innocent enough, but I found that 'see company' meant the terrors of the damned, that I had never dreamed of in all my life.

"I said I would board." "Who was my friend?" or "did I have money?" "I said I had money, and that my friend would shortly visit me." The next day I learned the character of the house; and then that awful word fixed itself on my person; its lodgment in my mind now made it visible on my clothes and seemed burned into my cheeks.

"I immediately wrote Harry and implored him to take me away. He came, we went through the agony of another meeting. I begged him make overtures with my mother; he then told me that my mother had heard of my flight and—that she died with my name on her lips."

"This prostrated me and for four weeks Harry stood by my bedside and watched over me. The character of the place, the physician and the circumstances gave room for gossip and slander, and calumny; and every zephyr seemed to say I had gone there because of the interesting condition I was supposed to be in. This dreadful situation, and un-

truthful story soon reached the ears of my father, as well as Harry's people, and he was driven from home."

"What was I to do? No home, no friends, no food, no clothing, no money; Harry as destitute as myself, and out of employment. I in a house of shame and sin, where was I to go, what was I to do? O after all these years of sin and shame it makes me shudder still!"

"I fought with the demons that came to my room for wicked purposes; I could do nothing; I could not get away; my only clothing was now owned by the landlady, and were locked up. Harry was at the home of a friend prostrated with fever as a result of his long vigil, and I was helpless. Words can not tell the terrors of such a place and such a life. I was still as pure as the new born babe; I did not fall; I was crushed and beaten into submission and subjected to the will and passions of the incarnate fiends that frequented this earthly hell."

"Harry recovered, he came to my rescue; took me to a distant relative of his that lived in the country. I remained there until that breath of slander and calumny reached me, and then these good people were compelled to send me away. Harry was so overcome with this new disaster that he fell a prey to consumption; his people took pity on him and allowed him to return to their roof, where, after lingering for a short time, he died. Then I was alone in this awfully wicked world."

"I returned to this city; I sought employment in the 'Woman's Exchange.' They gave me work in their dining

room; this kept soul and body together until the fiends who had known of my life of enforced sin informed on me. The president of this goodly institution of charity—a kindly Christian lady—called me to her one day and addressing me by the name that I had assumed, said: 'Laura, we will be obliged to dispense with your services.' With hot burning, scalding tears running down my cheeks, I inquired the reason. She said, 'you know why.' I implored her, I asked if I had not done my work well; if I did not deport myself as a lady in their dining room? She coolly said: 'Yes, that is all true enough, but you must go.' On my bended knees I begged of her not to send me away. 'Yes,' said she, 'but you must.' O why? said I. 'Because it will ruin our business if we keep you.' All for sweet charity's sake they sent me away."

"One of the patrons of the Exchange saw me as I left the place; he followed me and inquired the cause of my pained look. I told him I was no longer wanted, and had nowhere to go, or nothing to do. He put a ten dollar bill in my hand and asked me if he could call at my room in the evening; I consented. He called that evening. He appeared surprised on finding me so meanly quartered. The next evening he called again, and asked me to take a walk. I did so, for I saw no harm in affording a gentleman the pleasure of my company when he had given me assistance when sweet charity refused me the privilege of working for my bread. He took me to a suit of elegant rooms in a quiet part of the city, at the other end of this very street.

He insisted on my taking up my abode there; he furnished me with everything I could want. After a short time he made bold his designs; I repelled him for six long months. I begged him to furnish me some honorable employment, that I might make ample returns for the money he was lavishing upon me; but to no purpose. Finally he commanded me; then I threatened to expose him. With a wicked leer on his face and pointing his finger at me in scorn and derision, said: 'You here for six months, ostensibly as my mistress, who would believe you?' I was conquered. I submitted."

She stopped, buried her face in her hands and amid suppressed sobs and groans cried out in the agony of her soul, "May God Almighty consume such infamy in the brightness of His coming." "O why don't God permit me to end this terrible existence that I may be free from this remembrance of such a life? O the wickedness of this cruel, cruel world."

"The descent was gradual at first; it became more rapid as the time wore on. The biter began to realize that the bitten had fangs. The betrayed put the boot on the other foot; father, slander, friends, and christian charity had done their work; it was complete. Men were willing to lavish money on me for their gratification; not for my restoration; I began to forget my grief, and pain, and retaliate on them; I have fully glutted my vengeance. I have not only wrung their sheckles from them, but I have wrung their hearts as well. They have trampled me under their

feet, but many is the one who has humbled himself at mine and paid dearly to be shrived."

"O Julia, do you wonder then that we should strike back at society that has driven us to these straits? Do you blame us for the lives we are compelled to lead? Society has turned out the finished articles, ready for the tread-mill, the scourge, the jail, the grave. It has poisoned our minds; painted our faces; it has stamped on us the trade mark of the hardened criminal; it has enforced desperation on us and then labeled it perverseness; natures with evil tendencies: it has continued its persecution until we are maddened, and see in every face the purposes of the fiend, it has denominated our wretchedness, frenzy brought on by dissipation, when in fact it is hallucination. And when hallucination holds the torch which lights the road to murder, infanticide, to all that is abnormal and perverse it says, 'behold to what depths woman can fall?'"

She had finished. She took both of Julia's hands in her own, and looking up into her face, said, "Forgive me, Julia, for thus intruding the disgusting detail of my sinful life upon you, who never knew an evil thought."

Julia leaned forward and kissed her. "It is I that will rather thank you for what you have told me; not from any selfish motive, but if for nothing else I could most heartily thank you for that, for while you have been talking I have forgotten my pain; but that is only selfishness, but I thank you for your own sake. I have learned how much of the woman there is in you for all that society has robbed you of.

I thank you for another who is now languishing in a felon's cell."

Mary's own suffering made her quick to feel another's woe. "Let me help you," said Mary. "Oh, that you could!" said Julia.

"But name it and I will go the end of the earth for you."

Again the unexpected happened. For awhile they forgot their troubles and talked of other days — school, class-mates, and then the real friends of that joyous girlhood never to be forgotten.

There was Kate, ah, "My Kate," Mrs. Browning's "My Kate," and Bess, and Ruth, and Mollie, and on through the list.

"How Kate did dream and dote," said Julia.

"How oft," said Mary, "have we staid at her feet while she read in her rich, sweet tones, 'My Heart and I,' 'My Kate,' 'Mother and Poet.'"

"Yes," murmured Julia, half forgetful of herself:

> "Dead! one of them shot by the sea in the east,
> And one of them shot in the west by the sea.
> Dead! both my boys!"

"How often I think of her. I fancy now that I can hear her tremulous tones, and the deep pathos she could put in that stanza:"

> "What art can a woman be good at? Oh vain!
> What art *is* she good at, but hurting her breast
> With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain?"

"Sweet, lovely Kate, I wonder what has become of her?

The last I heard of her she was married, married some foreman in some large manufacturing establishment in Connecticut."

There was a far-away look in Mary's eyes, then she turned to Julia and said, "Would you like to know where she is now?"

"Certainly."

"Well, listen; do you hear that deep, bass voice down there?"

"I do."

"Well, that is Kate's husband."

"What name, please?"

"I never heard it, he goes by the name of 'Jaw-smith Jim.'"

"What does he do?" Mary had unconsciously dropped into the manner of her associates in her form of speech, and without turning her head replied; "punishes whisky when he gets it and feeds his pals wind puddings the balance of the time; and when that gets monotonous he entertains and amuses himself at the tenement house you see over yonder — pointing through the half open shutter — beating Kate and the brats." Julia stared in open-mouthed wonder, "Tenement house, does Kate live in a tenement house, Mary?"

"That's what I said. That's what he does, and there is where he keeps her, or rather allows her to starve."

"Beats that woman?" said Julia.

"Well, I should smile."

"And starves her, did you say?"

"Yes, and that don't half express it."

There was the sound of a woman's voice on the street below. "Listen, Julia, that's Kate now, she wanted him to go, hear her pleading tones, hear that baby's faint cry, poor thing, poor, poor Kate. My lot is hard enough Julia, O it is terrible, but it is a paradise compared to hers."

Julia looked the very picture of blank amazement, "Why, Mary?"

"It may sound strange to you, Julia, but, but,—that's what."

Julia repeated the words "that's what" mechanically. "What do you mean by 'that's what?'"

"I mean said Mary, 'that's what,' 'that's what I say,' I prefer my life to hers."

"O Mary, can it be possible?"

"Look! there she goes; one, two, three, four, and two more at the house—hell, you may say—over there. There's misery for you, that throws this in the shadow so far, that you will never think of my hard lot. Yes, I am miserable, but her lot is misery personified—it is damnation on earth."

"There are seven floors, some three hundred and fifty rooms, as many as six persons in each room, twenty-one hundred living wretches in that place. I've been there, I give Kate as much as I can afford, poor thing. When I think of her, when I see her in one small, bare room, no fire, no lights, no beds, no furniture of any kind, no carpets, nothing, nothing only straw, vermin, reeking with

filth, a six-month-old baby tugging at her bleeding breast, and she unable to sit up and hold it from sheer exhaustion and inanation, while another, one year older, crying on one side of her, and a third but three years old, chewing its finger-nails to the quick, and a fourth but four years old, with nothing to cover its poor, naked, shivering body but a part of an old calico dress, and two others of seven and eight, no better clad, and two starved memories, with their pinched faces ever haunting her—I say my life, as miserable and terrible, and loathing as it is, is a paradise to hers."

"I suffer, I have experienced all the torments of mind that any woman can suffer on her own account"—her face flushed deeply—"I know what it is to be a mother; and I tell you, Julia, if my only child was thus fathered and mothered, and housed, and clothed, and starved, it would drive me mad."

"Kate has tried to tell me, poor thing, but words can't express it. "You," said she, "can shut your door in men's faces, I am chained to this monster; you are looked upon as a criminal, I am a legalized victim; I scream, and plead, and struggle, and fight, and pray, in my despair, but there is no relief for me."

It was too shocking to talk about or to listen to. Both women were silent, the one just thinking of her own days of innocence, of light and love; the other stood on the border-land of a world of woe, tip-toeing, watching, longing for one faint gleam of the long-ago joy that comes from a life of purity.

"Hurting her breast
With the milk teeth of babes, and a
Smile at the pain."

said Julia musingly. "Awful, awful thought. Kate Hamilton come to this, so bright, so beautiful, so cultured, so refined, so everything that enters into and makes up the full and rounded woman."

Then laying her hand on that of Mary's, that had found its way, half unconsciously, half instinctively, because it wanted to just touch the hem of the garment of purity on her knee. "You must tell me all about this, Mary, not because of any morbid curiosity, but because I must go and see her and administer to her wants." Mary's eyes filled with tears as she looked into Julia's face. Placing her other hand on that of Julia's, the great crystal drops flowed down over her cheeks like rain. "You are an angel, Julia."

"No, no, my dear!"

"Poor race of men!" said the pitying spirit,
"Dearly ye pay for your primal fall;
Some flow'rets of Eden ye still inherit,
But the trail of the serpent is over them all!"

"You was about to tell me of Kate," said Julia.

"This is the story as near as I can recollect; Kate first met him at some charity entertainment; he had been sent there by his firm to superintend the construction of a sort of temporary stage, or arrange its scenic effect; he was a sort of dramatic art critic, amateur artist, and all that thing. He recited poetry in a low, musical tone to himself-like, while

he worked, from Mrs. Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese, you remember the lines:

'Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Hence forward in thy shadow.'

"Well, poor Kate was captivated. She began, in her eyes, an unholy acquaintance. It was clandestine from the beginning, but his voice, manner, looks and dress, stole her heart away, haunted her day and night. She dared not see him, of course, she, the daughter of a millionaire banker would not be allowed to tolerate the foreman of shops, even though he knew poetry and had a penchant for scenic effect. She kept up a correspondence for a year, then met him by appointment, then fell madly in love with him, and finally eloped with him. Married him. Banished herself from home—from a paradise, so to speak. Her father was quite old, as you remember, when he came to see her graduate; how tenderly he held her in his arms when she ran to him after the degrees were conferred; poor, old man. Kate's elopement killed him. He left no will. His two sons were both older than she, both were married and partners with their father in the bank; they took possession of everything. They were also stockholders in the manufacturing concern where Kate's husband worked. They had him discharged. They did everything they could to ruin him. They gave out that their sister was dead. Yes, and it was only too true, she was dead, absolutely dead to every thing and place and friend she had known.

"Some two years ago when she went to the bank and im-

plored of her brothers for the sake of her starving children, sufficient to keep them alive, they said they had no sister, that she was dead. That the date of her death was a thing well known, and could be seen by reference to their father's monument. And, as true as heaven, Julia, it is the very date of her elopement. They had their porter evict her from the bank as an imposter, a cheat and female fraud.

"But, to go back, the story is but the oft-repeated one of unbridled passion and lust on the one side, and submission on the other. She had mistaken him for a man of soul, and heart, and sentiment, and culture, a love for the beautiful, the true, the good; she awoke to find how sadly different the real facts were from that happy dream, to find that he was only a caricature on humanity, a beast, a fiend in human form, only the semblance of a man.

"If the fashioner of men should ever give a visible manifestation of himself to the world, his first duty to the human family would be to apologize for his part in the creation and existence of such creatures; and secondly, to place the mark of their beastliness in unmistakable characters so conspicuously on them, that even blind love could not be victimized.

But she had been snared, she was his prey, she was his opportunity, see? How do those lines run? It has been so long," a shade of sadness crossed her face. "Oh, yes,"

'How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
makes ill deeds done.'

"How often the opportunity, the right so to speak to

outrage such a creature is being done in the name of decency and holy matrimony." Julia's face wore a pained expression. "Pardon me, my dear, but I can't help it."

"No offense, Mary, but the truth of the fact is so painful and so apparent, and yet we go on prating about the glorious freedom of our sex, as though we had all there was in this world worth living for."

"They took a cottage, furnished it artistically for awhile; he found employment in different places where his aptness and skill were known. They lived happily and moderately; their first child was born in nine months and ten days after the marriage, and in five years they had five more.

"They had given up the cottage after the second year. They were obliged to sell the best of their furniture; the more children the less to eat, to drink, and to wear. Kate began to take in fine sewing. He was out of employment when the third child was born. He spent the product of her labor for blue ruin. From cottage to rooms, from rooms to single apartments, from single apartments to tenement house, where they now are."

There was a moment's pause. Julia took a small notebook from her pocket. "Can you give me the number?" "You see the place from here," said Mary. "Stop at the corner where I first saw and recognized you, go down that street two squares, where you will see the end of the building; go to the rear of it, up to the top floor, the seventh; down the entire length of the hall, last door on the right-hand

corner; that's Kate's." From palace to hovel, to living death.

Mary began to think of herself, the time, the clock on the mantel had been industrious and plodding on unnoticed, but it was four P. M. all the same.

CHAPTER XII.

"Misery loves company."
"In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be."

THE interview was at an end, Julia arose as if to go. Mary looking at her said, "You are tired, allow me"—the words died on her lips—she was about to say, "allow me to offer some refreshments." Julia had called upon her, it was purest accident, of course, but she had allowed her to sit at her feet, had kissed her, had taken her hand, had wept with her, that was the limit. It was not Julia who was making the wretched woman feel the chasm between them, she was her own accuser. To ask Julia to eat of the bread of sin was too much. The whole of her life came back in an instant. What was she to do? In her own house, her heart going out in all its old love for the friend of her youth, all her sympathies aroused for Julia in her distress. Mary's quick eye had seen and detected the strong emotions and effort Julia was making to compose herself. There was that expression in her visitor's face that indicated sleepless nights, stifled moans, hope struggling against dispair. Mary had taken a deep interest in the trial of John Ashton, she was in a position to appreciate the crushing force of circumstances when backed by the power and might of customs and precedent. She was also conscious that Julia's visit to this section of sin was simply an escape valve to her pent up feelings. She

thought she half divined the purpose—her mind was in the habit of running circumstances into conversations, setting the one off against the other, getting them into a fire of what in their girlhood days, they denominated cross-questions and crooked answers—for which Julia had done such an extraordinary thing. It was not by any process of reasoning that she had arrived at the point she had reached; it was not what men call a woman's way of jumping at a conclusion, it was not intuition—another name for reason—carried along by the fleet-footed messenger of woman's quicker passion, quicker feeling, that outstrips man's sluggishness, which he has been pleased to call his powerful, slow-going reason, no, it was her own misery that had sent the plummet down into the depth's of Julia's heart and mind, and found a response there. She knew from their wide difference in life's conditions, that only one thing could make them kin.

She knew that if she was to be of any aid to Julia in her hour of supreme distress, that the proposal must come from her; she had decided. "Julia, pardon me, I am about to speak of the other side of this picture; I know that the gulf that divides you from me would not be crossed by either of us if it were not for some very extraordinary cause." She paused, lifted her hand to her eyes, for she saw the pained expression on Julia's beautiful face, I am not about to mock you, for I have suffered too, too much to be thoughtless of another's pain. If the occasion was less than life and death I would not ask permission to come to your relief. I know all your troubles, I know the circum-

stances have crushed and blotted out the truth; but I believe as firmly as you do that John Ashton is an innocent man!

The scene had now changed; Julia Bullion was now looking into streaming eyes that sympathized with her in a grief that was too terrible for tears. "Misery," oh, thou great reconciler, thou maketh us to repent, not of good, generous, charitable thoughts; not of tender words; not of humane feelings; not of the helping hands extended to our yoke-fellows in distress! When thou seest fit to lay thy heavy hand upon us, it resteth not upon these bright spots in our memories; thou blotteth out not these oases in our hearts; thou maketh us rather to behold the stone and the dart that hath been hurled by us in our wrath at some sorrowing soul; thou maketh us to feel the thorn that we have placed in the pillow that would otherwise have been comfortable to some sorrow-stricken head but for our unrelenting hands, so swift to punish, and so slow to do good; thou maketh us to realize in thy presence that it is not our mercy and tenderness that we repent of, but our vindictiveness and vengeance.

Julia sat on the ottoman at Mary's feet. The "shriven" had now become "the father confessor." "Oh, Mary!" she broke forth, "your tears are the first that have been shed for that poor, poor, unfortunate man." Mary's tears of sympathy had been the key that unlocked the sealed fountain of her grief, and for the first time since that awful tragedy she wept. She buried her face in Mary's lap and wept bitterly and long. There was no attempt on Mary's part to check that flood of

tears; her crushed and bleeding heart had been too intimately acquainted with grief not to know what relief would come to her surcharged feelings by this outpouring of tears.

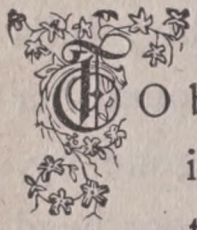
The eonversation that followed was long and earnest. Julia unfolded her plans and disclosed all that she hoped to gain, if she could only succeed in her projected schemes, if all did not fail in the crucial test, if every thing did not waste away in the hour of trial, then Mary could be of immense service and aid to her. They consulted as to the best methods, if once the sinking ship could be reached, Julia's quick and trained mind suggested, Mary's knowledge made possible.

When they had canvassed the ground thoroughly, Julia arose to go. Mary made bold to put her arms around her waist, as she had so many times done in years gone by, forgive me, Julia, but it is so good just to let my poor head rest for one minute on your shoulder, for then my past life is gone for one moment, heaven and earth are so very near, they have in fact met. Just then there was a gentle rap at the side door — Madame, your tea is waiting. Still hiding her burning face, with trembling voice "it would do me so much good, would you, O could you Julia" — but the words died on her lips — "no, no, I can't offer you the cup of sin." Julia divined her thought, pressing the lovely head against her own bleeding heart, "yes, Mary I can, I will, — I feel so faint, a cup of tea will do me so much good." "O thank you."

CHAPTER XIII

"Poverty is the only load which is the heavier, the more loved ones there are to assist in supporting it."

"Men think it an awful sight
To see a soul just set adrift
On that drear voyage from whose night
The ominous shadows never lift;
But it is more awful to behold
A helpless infant newly born,
Whose little hands unconscious hold
The keys of darkness and of morn."



TO be rich is to be unhappy sometimes, but to be poor is to be miserable always. The one is to be "on the ground floor" of society; the other to be "in the hole." To be uncaught is not always to be unpunished, any more than that things are not always what they seem. Suspicion is often conviction, but the real difference appears only by the place occupied. "On the ground floor?" "In the hole?"

"On the ground floor," that is advantage, that is your foot on your brother's neck, that is do as you like, regardless, that is "on top," that is "success," that is the opposite of "in the hole." The below is "the under dog in the fight," is in the basement, is the dungeon proper, that is "misery."

"In the hole" has no door, has no entrance, it is not

entered, it is penetrated. The victim does not go in, is thrust in, not by a passage, but through the hole. Must be stripped, must be naked. So long as clothed, possessed of the garb of "the ground floor," can not be forced in; but when *in*, persisting in living is rewarded by subsistence that is flung in through "the hole."

"In the hole" is not a place, is not a habitation, is not a tomb. It is nothing, it is every thing, it is a resort, a laboratory, a reservoir, a vacuum, a chasm, an abyss, it is hot blast, open furnace, cold blast, convertor, rolls, shears, it takes the place of heat, light, electricity, science, power, bread, water, fruit, food, ventilation, raiment.

"The dying process below feeds, gives color to, the living process 'on the ground floor.' The darkness and gloom 'in the hole' is the buoyancy and light 'on the ground floor.'

"'On the ground floor' there is only one thing to be dreaded, to be 'fought shy of,' that is the fear, that is the law, that is the aperture, which is the hole. The hole is in the ground floor, it is like the 'ghost,' it is here, it is there, it is everywhere, to fall in, to be put in, to be forced in, to be enticed in, to be persuaded in, to get in, *any way* is to be in, and that too forever, never to get out.

"The ground floor" has a language of its own, it is the *elite*, "the hole" has its equivalents. The one is the language "as she is spoke," the other is the hole's vernacular.

Wealth, luxury, place and power have their equivalents in "boodle." Caught napping equals, "pinched."

Foiled in management, speculation, manipulation, is being "quered." Satisfying a passion, gratification, has acquired that highly distinguished name of "prostitution." Convention, assembly, has been resolved into a "gang," a "mob." Flashing a roll, has been decided as "shoving the queer," and so on to the end of the chapter.

"The ground floor" is society. The "hole" is perdition. The aperture connecting the two is the umbilical chord that makes the two one. Julia Bullion now had her hand on the pulse, and she discovered that a circulation was still going on between the above and the below.

She stood on the verge of the chasm and heard the tale of woe from the abyss. She could not realize as yet all there was in society, or more properly, "in the hole" below society. She knew nothing of the intercourse existing, the intrigues carried on, through the aperture. She had suspected that there were young men, bachelors, a few libertines, gamblers, and toughs, that hung around the ragged edges of society who kept up an unholy alliance, and intimacy with the irretrievably ruined, but she had never suspected the real truth, that husbands and fathers were often the sole cause of the down-fall of half the unfortunate waifs clinging to the draggled skirts of society.

It was more than amazement with which she received the facts from Mary's lips, that at the time she was discharged by the over-sensitive ladies at the "Woman's Exchange" — all for sweet charity's sake — she had been followed by none other than Charles Hamilton, banker,

brother of Kate Hamilton, the wife of "Jaw-Smith Jim." That to possess her body and defile it, to gratify his passion, and fiendish desire he had expended money that belonged to his wronged, and outraged sister. That Mary had upon her knees begged and implored him for an opportunity to earn an honorable living, to do anything, rather than submit her body for the gratification of his lust, that when he learned that she had never willingly submitted to this life of sin and shame, decency hides its face, brazen infamy almost blushes, he then the more insisted on accomplishing his hellish purposes.

And this was not all, that three out of the five girls then under Mary's roof had been polluted, defiled, and ruined by married men. The more her heart sickened when she learned that this was a fair average throughout the fallen women of the entire city; that the real truth is in fact that married men are better acquainted with woman's life, character, habits, and desires, and that the risk they have at stake in keeping their part a secret makes them woman's most fatal foe in this hellish business of ruining their victims.

Julia for the first time in her life had stood upon the threshold of the below. She had caught only the first gleam of the lurid glare that shot up from the sulphurous rifts; but her mind was now so wholly absorbed in the fate of another that she left the entire matter with Mary for the time being, and charged her to do all she could in looking after the starving family of Kate Hamilton and to draw on

her for what funds she might be in need of to make them comfortable.

It is not within the purview of this narrative to go into the loathsome detail of the surroundings of the tenement house curse, or rather the curse that makes the tenement house a necessity. But as a brilliant historian once said of the mind of a dissolute politician, a history of that mind was a history of many thousand minds, so a description of Kate Hamilton and her starving children will suffice for the history of that large class of increasing victims of legalized prostitution.

Mary had narrated substantially all there was in the history of their unfortunate friend. The world pardons romance, but it despises facts. The secret is that romance and fiction do no harm to the theories and pet schemes of isms and dogmas, while the facts put society, theories, religions, all to shame.

Kate had made her last attempt to save herself and children from starvation that morning; she had dragged herself and children down to the saloon to implore her avowed supporter to minister to their wants; she had returned hopeless, and prepared to die.

Mary did not go to the tenement house that night empty-handed, Julia had contributed the entire sum in her purse before leaving, and Mary had added her portion and with a bountiful supply she made her way to Kate's room. There was no need of any formality, one does not stop to be introduced and ushered into the presence of misery.

She opened the door, its emptiness, its distitution, more horrid than ever before, it was darkness shadowed with gloom.

She had be-thought herself to take a tallow dip and some matches. She at once lighted the dip and placed it on the window-sill, for there was not another thing above the floor upon which to place it. She found Kate crouched in the middle of the room, with all her children closely packed around her. She had the babe clutched at her breast, it had partially satisfied its gnawing hunger, not with nature's food, but with the life-blood of the mother. The other children were in a state of suspended animation, between inanation and death. She had a supply of warm milk for the children, some hot coffee for Kate, together with bread and pressed beef.

When Kate saw the beaming face of her benefactor, she relinquished her hold on the infant, lifted her eyes and in broken utterances murmured, "My God, my children, I am afraid it is too late." But it was not too late, they revived under the influence of a generous supply of food and drink.

The two older boys had sold papers, blacked boots, hunted for decayed vegetables, inspected garbage piles, plied all the arts of the gamin during the summer months, but the chill winds of November had frozen the ardor of their young hearts, and they could not be coaxed, persuaded, or driven out to battle with the cold, heartless, pityless world. The father, "Jaw-smith Jim," had done nothing all the long summer but harangue the strikers, of which

he was one, and consume the time in drinking up the proceeds of the contributions furnished his striking assembly by others at work.

With trembling lips, Kate remarked "that the crisis was now upon them, and there was nothing with which to meet it." She had sold the last article of furniture, the last picture, the last vestige of every thing they possessed on earth. The next month's rent would soon be due, and there was no way to gather up six dollars to pay for the miserable privilege of existing in that awful place.

There had been no fire in the room since the February before, the filth, and damp, and mould were clinging to the walls and ceilings, the floor was covered with the filth of a year's accumulation, and the noisome smell was almost beyond endurance. Mary said she would see that the room was cleansed, and beds, fire, food and clothing forthcoming. She kept her word. It was done.

Truly the poet, not knowing where his next day's dinner was coming from, stowed away in the garret of the Royal Palace, could sing that there was no place like home. So did Kate; she shut her eyes, and from the depths of her soul wished that there was no place like home. There are thousands and thousands of other hovels, dens, garrets, cellars, huts, cabins, sod houses where the inmates think and feel that there is no place like the particular one under consideration. And why? The man born with the silver spoon in his mouth, the Shylock, says, "bad management," the miser says, "extravagance," the religious crank, "disobedi-

ence to the will of God," the intemperate temperance fanatic, "RUM," the fresh air idiot, "ventilation," the protectionist says "free trade," the free trader says, "protection," the real truth is heard from the victims themselves. When the landlord comes for his rent, he hears it; when the grocer goes for his two-year-old bill, he gets it; the butcher asks for the balance of his lingering account, hears it; "Jawsmith Jim," haranguing the strikers, tells it; and it is all summed up in that one word, "family."

He can't own a home of his own because he has a family to keep; can't pay rent because he has a family to keep; can't clothe himself and his wife because he has a family to keep; can't clothe the children because has a *large* family to keep; can't pay his grocer because he has such a large family to keep; can't send them to school because there are so many of them to buy books for; can't pay his butcher's bill because he has a large family to keep; can't work for $1.50 a day because he has a large family to keep; he can't be anything but poor because he has a large family to keep. The family makes this such a home that there is no other place just like it; and God be thanked that there are none just like it.

The old proverb needs revision, "As a side hill for pumpkins, as a nigger is for dogs, as a fool is for luck, so children keep men poor." Of course, the religious enthusiast, who looks upon marriage as a sacrament, who sees in the family the cradle of the church; the quasi-statesman who sees in it the nucleus of the State; will all hold up their hands

in holy horror and denounce anything not in accord with gush and rot; the fine frenzy that draws upon the imagination for what is rarely seen in the facts. All will strike a tragic air, with upturned eyes, nasal psalmody, and that expectant look that bids heaven hear when they pronounce that word, home. "That charmed word, that one syllable through which countless melodies thrill." They will tell you of "the laughter of the children," never of the measles, the scarlet fever, the whooping cough, the mother caged as securely as the wild beasts until there are gray hairs, prematurely old faces, wrinkled brows, faded and shrunken cheeks, lusterless eyes, palsied arms, tired backs, trembling limbs, blistered feet, ruined health, sleepless nights, and solicitude and dread and fear. They prate about "the sound of the well known foot steps; how sweet to hear the watch-dog bay deep-mouthed welcome; of the eyes that brighten and grow brighter, the voices of never-dying affection." They hear "in the ripple of the meadow brook"—that their fathers never owned—"the sweet sound of home." They hear "the lowing of the cattle coming from the pastures"—that never existed only in their diseased imaginations. They dwell touchingly on the shadows of tender sorrows, the reflections of fond memories.

They affect to tell you that the word that growls for "Home" "rises, and sparkles, and leaps, and thrills, and whispers, and chants, and prays and weeps," yes it *preys*, it moans, and agonizes, it does all that and more. They tell you that "it glistens like a shield, springs up like a fountain,

thrills like a song, twinkles like a star, leaps like a flame, glows like sunset, sings like an angel." Yes it rises like a troubled dream, a night-mare, it sparkles with the lightning flash of the green-eyed monster, it leaps like the tiger, it thrills like the terror of a raging storm, it whispers fear, dread, hunger, disease, death. It chants grief more than it sings songs of joy, it prays and spells it with an "e", it weeps more than it laughs, it glistens like a shield that as often hides the face of the foe as it reveals the face of a friend, it springs up like a fountain and its waters are often as bitter and scalding, as they are sweet and cooling. It thrills like a song and the song is as often a wail and a moan, as it is an indication of joy. Its star-like twinkle is often but the last ray of dying hope losing itself in the thick darkness of the coming night. It leaps like the flame is often the furnace-blast that frets the roof with fire. Its glow like the sun-set is often the flash from the sulphurous rifts that light up the blackened clouds of the coming storm. Its angel songs are as likely to be the songs of angels of darkness as angels of light.

Religion and Home. Words that have brought transcendant meaning up from the best passions of all by-gone times, filled the world with history-bloody-often times, true, but history still, filled it with poetry and song, and love and light, filled it with holy desires, loving and loved adorations, winged persuasions, and veiled destinies, mystic and brilliant, splendors and glooms, and glimmering incarnations of hopes and fears, and twilight fantasies, and sorrows, that have

bred families of sighs and tears and heart-aches, a few pleasures, blinded with their tears, that have groped in the dark places and have known no light but their own dying smiles. We have exhausted all the vocabularies on these two words, we have covered them with green laurel boughs, we have piled passionate rhetoric on all their sombre sides until their sorrows smile like a May Queen, suppose we stop a minute and take some testimony from the cold, naked, stubborn facts.

CHAPTER XIV

"It is only hatred not love that requires explanation. The source of the best and holiest, from the universe up to God, is hidden behind a night of too-distant stars."

JOHN ASHTON had devoted his time to the closing up of his business that was full upon him at the fatal hour when he fell a prey to circumstances. On three several occasions since his sentence he has at the request of attorneys and parties in interest, appeared in open court.

He read much, he played chess with the keepers, he had discovered that there was a woman at his back; he had not only read the books she had sent him, he had read between the lines; the slight sinuous lines that meant nothing to his jailer as he turned over the leaves of books, or the slight shaking of the volumes by their covers did not disturb them.

"Work on my medicine work, for thus are credulous fools caught."

Books are sometimes dangerous when their meaning is understood, more dangerous oft when misinterpreted. Almost daily there arrived at the cell a package of papers or books; this thing had continued for nearly four months, and nothing had happened; the sheriff's suspicions, if he ever had any, had been quieted completely. The keepers had become enamored of their charge, they had for hours listened

to the flow of bright, entertaining narrative that fell like music from his tongue. It was travel, history, poetry, life in London, Paris, Berlin, Naples, Alexandria, the Alps, Italy, the Mediterranean, Egypt, that wonderland of the Nile, with its pyramids and learning; but never a word of himself or his fate.

The jailer's pity was fast changing to love and reverence; to stay and watch this man, to keep him as a victim for the gallows that he could hear building, to preserve him for an ignominious death, seemed like a second time betraying his Lord.

Would he do it? Could he do it? It would have been difficult to have told on whom the coming execution was making the most impression, the sheriff and his deputies, or the condemned man.

They could hear the rustling of the wings of the angel of death, already muffled with the dews of that awful night.

John Ashton seemed to be the only man whose mind was calm, whose perturbed spirit gave no outward manifestation of inward commotion. Was it because the mind can not compel the body to feel the approach of that king of shadows, or was it because his soul was big with the fate of this house of clay?

The last night had come. Farewell on the morrow.

"We are such stuff
As Dreams are made of, and our little Life
Is rounded with a sleep!"

CHAPTER XV

"The hour is come:—the destined star has
risen
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong,
thick set
The sentinels — but true Love never yet
Was thus constrained. It overleaps all
fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like heaven's free
breath,
Which he who grasps can hold not; like
Death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his
way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the
array
Of arms. More strength has Love than he
or they;
For it can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos."

EXPECTATION sits heavily on the soul of man. The greatest test of greatness, of heroic devotion, courage, strength, fortitude, of all that makes up the ability to do, to act, to direct, to compass about, to obey, to command, to execute, to live, to struggle, to suffer defeat, to buffet disaster, to sail triumphantly on victorious seas, to die, is comprehended in that one monosyllabic, crucial word, Wait. It stands at the end of every question we ask; it

crowds itself into every germ of every seed, of every thought, of every act; it plants itself at the opening vista of every life; it is written on every floating banner, unfurled at the head of every advancing column; it precedes the vanguard of every marching host; it closes up the opening files; it fills with bright and shining shapes the wasted and depleted ranks; it fights the battles of fallen comrades; it cheers the fading hope; it nerves the feeble arm; it stays the retreat; it shouts in the ears of wavering columns; it flutters around the tattered standard about to fall; it clutches at the fleeting shadows of every sinking courage; it floats at the mast-head of every ship; it lingers on the dying waves of every sedgy beach; it speaks to every longing soul words of hope; it pictures whitening sails that never come to shore; it said "Bleucher or night," at Waterloo; "Stand fast, we are in the right," at Gettysburg.

"Serene I fold my hands and wait
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me."

On that dark and rainy night in April, John Ashton thought he saw a star of hope. The howling winds were the rustling of the wings of the angel of deliverance or the muffled sound of the storm that should die away on the last breath of his expiring body, which?

He read Paul's Defense before King Agrippa to his guard. He recited from memory the twenty-third Psalm; the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah.

O how the clarion notes of that brightest, best, grandest, of old heroes swelled his soul; how the flood-tides of life rolled up and broke in sorrowful murmurs on the troubled shores of his life so near at hand. The billowy waves of emotion piled and heaped against the finished scaffold.

Would this wilderness, this solitary place of his life yet be glad for him? Would this desert yet rejoice? Would the roses that were now cradled in the bosom of the April storm without, blossom bright and fair, before his eyes, or would they be blood-stained above his tomb? Would there be the glory of Lebanon in tree and flower, or would it be the low requiem dying away in the sowing of the sad hemlock, the solemn pine, the drooping willows? Would he yet behold on earth the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God? Would there be strength in weak hands and feeble knees? Would the fearful heart be strong? Would God come with vengance to destroy or recompense to save? Would the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be unstopped? Would this wilderness of four walls break out with waters of mercy, would this desert have a stream of deliverance? Would this parched ground, so hot that his earthly sandals were already scorched with the coming heat of death, be a pool of safety? Would from this habitation of the dragon of the law yet be green with grasses and reeds and rushes? Would this highway be the way of holiness that would lead to deliverance? Would it be so plain that he could not err therein? From the agony of his soul came that burning question, would there be no lions there, no

sleuth-hounds of the law there in the way? Would he be the redeemed that walk there unmolested? Would he be the ransomed of the Lord that night? Would he come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon his head? Would he, O would he obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away? Would the good God yet, with the boundless handkerchief of his mercy, wipe all tears away? Would he yet live to die an honored and honorable death? Would loving and tender hands yet carry him out and lay him away amid the music of birds and bees snd cover his tomb with pure and bright immortelloes? Would the warm winds that have kissed the fair fields of sunny Southland call forth the sweet flowers to bud and blossom all over his grave? An earnest of God's love and promise that he would again come forth to a happy resurrection, and drink deep and copiously of the waters of the River of Life that flow hard by the throne and make glad the city of our God.

Somehow, when death comes to cashier all heads on a level with the lowest, God is the bed-rock, Christ our sheet-anchor, and faith the only hawser in which we trust to hold our frail bark to its moorings. Somehow, then we are all glad to believe in inspiration, in miracles, in resurrection. Somehow, then we see that we have believed a thousand things more absurd than any thing we have effected to believe was absurd in the Bible. Somehow, then we cling to Mother God, the sweetest name on earth, the dearest name in heaven. Somehow, then to know that for us as well as for him who first uttered it, "I know that my Redeemer

liveth," outweighs and argues down all the fine frenzy, no matter how it may be painted and covered with passionate rhetoric.

To be like the time, John Ashton had beguiled the time, he had read to his guards, he had talked with them, he had whiled away the time with them, in fact, he had entertained them until his four iron walls were to them a fountain of light. He had been like the innocent flower, not that he might be the serpent under it, but that he might do for himself what blinded justice had failed to do.

His plans were completed. He sat by his guard, as was his custom, engaged in earnest conversation until about 10 o'clock. He usually took a pace cross the narrow cell floor, for probably fifteen minutes, then prepared for his couch, this night was to be his last.

Among the many volumes of books that had been permitted to come and go, there was one that had escaped the notice of both jailer and guards. It contained a sponge the size of a man's fist, a flat glass bottle containing nearly a pint of chloroform.

These had been secreted about his person and bed clothing at times of inspection, and had eluded the notice of the jailer and guards. He had been provided with three strong silken cords, each about four feet in length. These he had no difficulty in concealing about his person.

The guard took no notice of him as he paced his cell floor, it was his custom; in fact, every movement he was now going through, he had performed each evening for the last

four months. Why should they create any suspicions in the mind of his guard ?

Little did the simple-minded guard think his prisoner was the practiced athlete, the far-sighted and far-thoughted lawyer, the bold and resolute man, preparing for his deliverance! So kind, so gentle, he did not suspect him capable of any guile, any strategic thought or action. His confidence had been so absolutely gained by the man he was supposed to be watching, that when the watched became the watcher, it aroused no suspicions in his mind.

Ashton had passed and repassed him, probably twenty times. When at the door of the cell, the prisoner would turn and be standing at his guard's back, would walk past him, turn around, face the guard, and pace by him and return. The opportunity for saturating the sponge had come, it was accomplished without attracting the guard's attention. One-half the fluid had been absorbed, the bottle had been securely recorked, and placed in the prisoner's pocket. The guard sat cross-legged with his hands locked over his lifted knees. The time was most propitious. Ashton was an athlete, strong, quick and possessed of iron nerve. With one quick spring, he was master of the situation. He threw his left shoulder against the left side of the guard as he was passing him, his left arm passing over his body, and clutching his right arm above the elbow, completely and securely fastening it against the body. In his right hand he held his sponge, and his right arm had been passed round his neck at the instant he sprang upon him. He now pressed

the sponge tightly against his mouth and nostrils. He had thrown his left leg over his crossed legs and locked hands. His left leg was thrown over his right knee, this enabled Ashton to pass his foot over his left, and secure a grape-vine lock on the underside of his right. The whole weight of Ashton's body was thus thrown on his legs, and securely fastened him to his chair with his right foot firmly on the floor.

The guard was so completely taken by surprise, so wholly unexpected was the attack, that he was unable to make a move, a struggle or the faintest outcry. In less than a minute he was unconscious and absolutely powerless. Ashton quickly placed his sponge in his rubber tobacco pouch, and stowed it away in his pocket.

It was but the work of a minute to remove his coat, as well as that of his guard, and exchange places, so far as appearance of hat and coat would go. He immediately bound and secured his guard, and put him in the bed. The sheets were made into ropes and a gag. After securely fastening his hands and feet, and preparing the gag to be used whenever he regained consciousness, he arranged the scant furniture, his own clothing, as best he could, and took the place of the guard to await the coming of the deputy and the guard, who were to relieve the man on watch, at the hour of midnight.

Nothing had escaped the vigilant eye of Ashton, he had suggested ventilation, and had been successful in having his views adopted and put into use, so that the last trace of

the chloroform had gone before the arrival of the deputy and the guard.

The guards were armed with the most approved pattern of revolvers. Ashton was now in possession of the one, his cords and gags in readiness. The usual position of the guard was to sit with his face to the prisoner, his back to the entrance to the cell. The cot was at the end of the cell farthest from the cell-door, the distance between the prisoner and guard being about ten feet. The only light in the cell was that furnished from a dark lantern placed on a stool by the side of the guard, the rays thrown on the prisoner.

The guard regained consciousness about 11 o'clock, and was at once ordered to open his mouth and submit to be gagged. The gentle manners of the prisoner had all disappeared, he sternly informed the guard that any attempt on his part to give an alarm would be rewarded with another application of the anesthetic, and if, at the approach of the deputy and the guard, he moved a muscle, it would be instant death to the three, as he was bent on his escape, or if he died, it would be after they had been first dispatched.

Then, for the first time, he spoke of his innocence to the guard, calling him by name, he thus addressed him, "I am innocent, as much so as you, of the death of Dr. Arlington. I consider it my duty to make my escape, and I shall see to it that you are not in any way held responsible for my so doing, or that you are in no way held to answer for any complicity in the act; you shall be exonerated from any and all wrong doing. Trust me." The guard saw there was no

other alternative. He remained quiet. He could do nothing more.

As the clock in the belfry struck the hour of twelve, Ashton heard the well-known footsteps of the night deputy and his guard as they came down that long, low corridor that led to his cell. It was the supreme moment. All the terror of four months now crowded into that crucial, fleeting minute. Wait, was now action. The key was placed in the lock, "click"—the huge, massive door of solid plate-iron swung on its hinges. The soul of the guard had shrunken into nothingness, the mental anguish and suffering of the prisoner, had swelled his gigantic soul and heart to immense proportions.

He turned half way around on his chair, the guard had not closed the door, his suspicions seemed to be aroused, would he never come in. Great beads of sweat now stood out on the doomed man's brow. Were all his plans to come to naught? Strategy first, the fierce struggle, if need be, afterward. A whisper, is not a tone; a nod, a smile, is enough to kill sometimes, a slight motion of the hand as if commanding silence. "Shut the door, he sleeps." The guard obeyed. He swung the ponderous door, it closed. Quick as a flash of light, the dark lantern was turned on the two men, the gleam of the guard's revolver shone in their eyes. "Up with your hands, or you are dead men!" The master mind was asserting itself. Both men obeyed.

The lantern had been attached to his coat, this gave him the freedom of his hands. Lifting his left hand on a

level with his revolver held in his right, Ashton thus addressed them, without ever a tremor in his well modulated voice: "Gentlemen, for such you have ever been to me, you have known me for years as an honorable man, I am not guilty of the crime for which I am soon to pay the penalty with my life. I have no thought of quietly submitting to this judicial murder. I have no quarrel or cause of quarrel with you. I would not harm a hair of your heads. I do not ask you to aid me in any way or to do anything that would charge you with any complicity in my attempted escape. You are in my power. It is needless for you to resist. Your guard is not harmed, he is simply bound. I do not wish to commit willful murder, but I must be free or I will be obliged to sacrifice you both."

"Without lowering your hands face about to this side-wall — directing them with his left hand — stand up close to the wall, gentlemen." He then took a revolver out of the deputy's right hip pocket, transferred it to his own, a pair of hand cuffs out of his left hip pocket. "Bring the elbow of your right arm on a level with your shoulder, Mr. Deputy, your hand pointing to the ceiling, your face against the wall." It was with a shiver that the deputy felt the cold steel clasp firmly around his naked wrist. "Now, Mr. Guard, lower your left arm until your elbow is on a level with your shoulder." The other end of the bracelet was deftly and quickly fastened on his wrist. There was that amount of cleverness in the manner of Ashton's manipulations, that

these two men accustomed to secure and bind men as they would wild beasts, felt that they were powerless.

He then took from the guard's right hip pocket his revolver, from his left another pair of hand cuffs — this looked like good fortune — "Mr. Guard, bring your left shoulder up to and touch the deputy's right, place your back against his, bring your right elbow on a level with your shoulder, your hand pointing to the ceiling."

Both men saw the hand-writing on the wall. The deputy's left hand was soon shackled to the guard's right. Then they were backs together, and hands securely fastened.

On either side of where the deputy stood there were heavy staples projecting from the wall, about on a level with his shoulder, in these staples were a pair of rings evidently intended for the very purpose which Ashton now used them. He passed the cords, he had intended using for the purpose of securing their hands, through these rings and securely fastened them in the shackles. He then put soft gags in their mouths, took the keys from the deputy's pocket, changed hats with the deputy, and proceeded to go out. He opened the door to the cell, passed out, locked it, took up the lantern left on the outside by the officer and walked down the long, dark corridor until he reached the door that led into the main hall, or reception room.

On the three several occasions that he had been conducted from the cell that he was now leaving, he had observed everything, even to the keys used by the deputy. He had selected it out of the bunch as he walked along the corridor.

With a firm and resolute hand he now placed it in the key hole, turned the bolt, and swung the door open and walked out; securely fastened it as he had seen the deputy do; passed the night watchman's door. The night watch had observed but one man coming out. He put his head out the door to ascertain the cause. He received a satisfactory answer. The deputy thought it safer to have two men in the cell with the prisoner than just the one.

"Was the prisoner sleeping well?"

"He was."

"Where are you going?"

"I am going out for a little while; when I return will leave the keys with you."

He stepped out into the night, closed the front door and locked it after him; glided swiftly into the alley at the corner of the jail and disappeared in the darkness.

He passed down the alley to the first street, then one square east, where he found a closed carriage with two horses attached and driver on the box.

"How long have you been waiting?" was his only remark to the man on the seat.

"Not long," was the laconic answer.

The horses were off at once in a full round trot, and never slackened their pace until the city was left far behind them and the clean, white farm houses began to show by the flashes of lightning that every few minutes shot athwart the sky. The night was very propitious, thought Ashton. How many persons have seen me? Will any of them remember

of having seen me this night? On such a night those who are so unfortunate as to be out remember better than if the streets had been thronged with people.

The only person he had met between the jail and the carriage was an aged man, with long straggling beard and white hair, his face almost hidden under a gray slouch hat, pulled far down over his eyes. He had noticed that the old man had lifted his head and looked into his face. Had the old man really seen him; was he looking at him, or was he startled by the flash of lightning just at that moment?

Their paths lay in different directions. The horses sped on. At early dawn they pulled up at a hostelry in the city of C. — thirty-five miles in five hours. Not so bad for such a night.

"This trip was settled for before we started, was it not?"

"Yes."

The rain was still pouring down in torrents; the silent passenger asked no questions, but proceeded quietly and rapidly on his way. He looked neither to the right nor to the left, but pressed quickly on, until he stood in front of a door bearing a certain number that had been years ago burned into memory as if with a heated iron. The door bell rang; an elderly lady answered the call. "Come in; you are very wet; you look tired; will you have a cup of tea?" "If you please." He then threw himself down on the lounge and waited for the tea. It was soon coming; he drank it; was told that he could retire; he gladly did so.

That sleep was long and refreshing. It was two o'clock in the afternoon when he awoke.

His first thought was of the gray-haired old man. Why should that phantom, as it were, so fix itself in his mind? We shall see. The old man seemed to know the course he was bent on, as well as Ashton knew his. If he was not accustomed to the route, the path was well mapped out in his mind. "East three squares, to your right down the narrow street, follow this until it debouches into M, to the left ten squares, cross to second narrow street, take walk close by high wall until large, high building is reached, go to rear entrance, take back stairs, go up to seventh floor, down hall to 359, your key fits this door."

The old man followed directions with all the care of the pathfinder accustomed to follow trails. It seemed to him that he was alone in that great city, he had not seen a living being in his walk, not even a lonely sentinel. It was with a feeling of relief that he heard the bolt turn and the door open.

There are times when one is alone, and finds one's mind meeting with another mind, that has been there in anticipation, that the very loneliness becomes a personality, and the sense of being is so full upon one that individuality and silence are brothers. It is a feeling akin to possessing all there is in sight, and supplies the mind with a kind of food that takes away that longing desire for home and friends. As he gazed round the room, he saw the handiwork of some loving friend.

To come suddenly upon some object placed purposely

in our way by loving hands, touches a chord in our souls akin to something divine. It is seeing where God has been and trusting in Him.

There was a fire in the grate, a light on a small stand, two chairs—what need had he for two chairs—because of the spirit of friendship in our natures that will not allow us to be alone in the world. Man includes brother, sister, they two, reach out before and after, appealing for kinship that elevates humanity, and makes it by nature superior to the wild beast.

There was a bed, scant, but clean, a larder filled with choice food, of a kind that might have been suggested by one who had been accustomed to purchasing food for long journeys; a pitcher of water, a note directing him to the place where it might be replenished when the supply was gone, wash bowl and towels, soap, combs, brushes, mirror.

The old man gazed at himself, and smiled as he caught the first reflection in the glass. He, too, had seen a lonely footman at the hour of one in the morning; would he recognize that face if he should chance to meet it again? It looked as though it might be a woman in disguise. There was too much color, too much fullness of the face, the mustaches might have been glued on.

He slept, fitful, dreamy sleep, sudden awakenings, cold sweats standing on his brow; his hands clenched in imaginary struggles. Morning came, the day rolled on, night followed with its darkness, and the rain still fell in torrents. There was a gentle tap at the door. It startled him; he

arose and opened it. A newspaper was thrust in by a messenger boy who said never a word, but rushed on his way.

He hurriedly ran his eye over the head lines of the paper. He felt that it must contain something of interest to him, for he had never before known a newspaper delivered at a tenement house. Who could have sent it? While he was thus musing his eye caught the following: OUTRAGED JUSTICE CHEATED — JOHN ASHTON, THE MURDERER OF DR. ARLINGTON, DODGED THE FATAL NOOSE — THE CLEVERNESS OF HIS DELIVERY OFFSETS THE STUPIDITY OF THE CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE THAT HE HAD ALLOWED TO BE WOVEN ABOUT HIM — DETECTIVES ARE ON HIS TRACK, AND HIS CAPTURE IS ONLY A QUESTION OF A FEW HOURS.

The report gave a description of the team that the old man had noticed as he passed Ashton in his flight from the jail. He recalled the appearance of the man and his quick step and entrance into the closed carriage.

Newspaper reports are supposed to be the very embodiment of wisdom, but generally they are but the source of general misinformation. They certainly were in this case. Ashton had calculated very closely. He had the only key to the main entrance to the jail. Through this door must come all those who entered into the main corridor that led to the cells below, and to the one he had occupied for the past four months

The night watch was as securely locked in his room, as the deputy and his two guards in the cell. There was no one to give an alarm, and it was not until eight o'clock in

the morning that the sheriff had any knowledge of what had happened. He at once dispatched a messenger to the residence of his deputy to learn why he was not on duty. When he learned that the deputy had not been at his home during the night, he suspected that all was not right. He concluded at once that he had been bribed. No time was lost in opening the door to the main entrance. This once done, the doors to the steel cages were tried and found to be locked. The night watch could give no information, further than that the deputy had said to him when going out, that he considered it safer to leave both the guards with the prisoner that night. On being assured that his prisoner was securely locked within, the sheriff could not account for the absence of his trusty deputy. He had counted on him to assist him in working the victim off.

It was fully eleven o'clock before the cell was reached, but the real situation could not then be learned as the door was of solid steel, and no sight of the inside could be had until the door was removed. This took up fully three hours more.

The sheriff shook the ring that was used for the purpose of pulling the door on its hinges when unlocked. He called aloud. The only sound that reached his ear was a suppressed groan. It was impossible to distinguish voices.

The scene that met the eyes of the sheriff as he entered the cell was a sort of serio-comic one. There stood his deputy and one guard, back to back, hands shackled together, and gags in their mouths, and securely tied to the

wall of the cell, while the other guard was as safely fastened to the bed, with a gag in his mouth.

When released the deputy and guard both fell to the floor exhausted. The guard on the cot had fared better. From him the sheriff first learned the story of the deliverance. As the guard related the facts there was a sense of shame and relief visible on the face of the sheriff; and when he came to consider the cool deliberation with which the plot had been carried out, all his pity and good-will toward Ashton turned into rage and revenge. It was not so much that he blamed Ashton as that he accused himself of negligence. No accusation is so bitter, so uncompromising, so unrelenting as self-accusation. Our anger, our bitterness, our blame, our feeling toward another, sometimes goes to the extent that it acts as its own foil, and we feel that we have been too severe, too hasty; not so when we are enraged at ourselves.

When he thought it all over, how senseless it was for him to have any qualms, any sentimentality about hanging a lawyer who could entice a man into his private office and without a moment's warning send him into eternity; his pity, his feeling for such a man now seemed so senseless, so inexcusable that his passion knew no bound. His rashness, his lack of self-control passed from rage to ridiclousness; he paced up and down the low, dark corridor. "This show," said he, "was advertised to come off between ten A. M. and four P. M., and it shall, if I have to be the victim." But it did not come off all the same. John Ashton was too much of a hero, a stragegist, to die when there was a good reason for not doing so.

CHAPTER XVI

"Men have faith in wrinkles."

"For when events, which are mutable, address a question to our souls, Justice, which is unchangeable, summons us to reply."

"THE CLUE"—mentioned by the newspaper—followed up, took the sneak of humanity, commonly called a detective, to the city of C. The aforesaid parasite of the law here lost sight and scent of the trial, and returned baffled, out-witted, out-generaled, undone.

Above the justice of circumstances there is the justice of humanity, a few noble souls always serve to keep the justice of humanity alive. The heat of the court room of November was gone, the genial sunshine of April was come. Men were now ready to allow circumstances to speak in another language. Had there been anything developed since the death of Dr. Arlington that even hinted that Ashton would be the gainer by his removal? Nothing. Then since the taking of Ashton's life would in no way make amends for Dr. Arlington's death; what boots it to society to murder him against his sworn testimony that he was innocent?

The law could not lay its hands on Ashton; its devotees cast about to find some one who could be coupled with the crime who might be benefited by the murder. Always behind the scaffold, the rack, the lash, there is building the temple, moderation, humanity.

There is an inscrutable something behind the will of the evil-doer that is constantly breaking down his bold front, washing away his courage, following him like a phantom. The faces of his friends, his old haunts, seem to say to him, "you are changing, you are not yourself." The man fighting with himself is undermining his walls, his fortifications to get sand bags wherewithal to back the wall, they totter, they fall, they disclose the breach, they point to the abyss.

The sleuth hounds of the law had lost the scent, they gave up the search, they skulked back into their dens to meditate. These vampires of humanity are themselves criminals, their criminality grows upon them, their appetites increase by what they feed upon. They make it society's business to turn itself into a man-trap, to catch and persecute whomsoever they suspect, and punish rather than to save the innocent and rescue the perishing.

The great ocean of action that daily rolls over humanity and breaks in upon our minds by means of dots, dashes and printer's ink, today drowns yesterday, and Ashton's delivery is followed by cyclone, railway accident, suicide. Even the phantom-like, gray-haired old man, who at the dead of night saw a fleeting shadow of a man going away from the jail, must needs go about the streets, and make inquiry if the futitive be yet taken, before he can find out that society has lost track of him.

This gray haired phantom was a tenement-house occupant, he could give society nothing, and society lost all interest in him. If the hand of charity would furnish him subsistence, then he would live, if not, then he must die. Kate Hamilton and the old man had found a friend in Julia Bullion, and they lived, thanks to Mary, the fallen, for the part she had taken in their behalf.

PART II

CHAPTER XVII

"He who has a partner has a master."

JUDGE BULLION had been lawyer and judge for forty years. As a lawyer he had relied, as all lawyers must, on "the glorious uncertainty of the law," as a judge, which he had been for ten years, he had come to put trust in decrees, judgments and sentences. Ashton had cheated the gallows, true, but it was only for a moment, so to speak. Every approach of his sense that carried intelligence to his brain was on the alert, on the tip-toe of expectation, waiting to announce the fugitive's capture and return. The longer the time, the more certain that he must be captured and returned. Would the man allow himself to be captured? The judge had been surprised at the course taken by his partner, had he no respect for the verdict of a jury, would he fling insult into the very teeth of the court pronouncing sentence? "It was not lawyer-like," the judge said to himself. "Lawyers ought to be the very last men to oppose the dignity of the law; they, above all men, should gracefully submit to the decrees of the court. It is certainly a bad precedent for a lawyer to seek to establish. Would I, after trial, sentence, of my client advise him to plan and

plot against the officers of the law, and do so ungraceful and ungrateful a thing as to betray the confidence of majesty's servants? No, indeed; lawyers, I say, above all other men, can not afford to thus trample upon the dignity of decrees and sentences."

Julia had overheard her father's soliloquy; she approached him, always with the greatest deference and profound respect. "Pardon me, father, for my intrusion upon your thoughts." He bowed with that patronizing air of the court; as the court usually does; not because the court owes you any respect or consideration; but because it would not be becoming in the court to omit an ancient form that has been handed down from the dim and misty past; "but did I understand you to say that if you had known of John's"— they called him by his given name — "plans to escape that you would have opposed them. I mean to say, Julia," half rising in his chair, "as much as I love John, I should certainly have exposed the plot if it had come to my knowledge."

"Then," said Julia, with more than her usual warmth, "if you now knew where he was you would feel it your duty to inform on him?"

He hesitated. She saw her opportunity. "If he were here at this moment would you feel it your duty to hand him him over to the authorities?" That was a hard question, but the Judge had conquered humanity. He answered with that steely ring in his voice that was such a terror to the victims of the law:

"I most assuredly would."

"Then in your blind submission you would be willing to see the creature trample upon and crush the creator, would you?" His look was half of pity and half of scorn. The reply was ready on his lips; he was about to say, "You are a woman and do not understand these things," when he bethought himself; for he had been made to feel the force and vigor of her strong, keen logic; her power of analysis; her ability to reason before. He withheld the words, and lifted the thread-bare old foil, "Women cannot possibly be made to see the eternal fitness of things; they cannot even tell the truth — I mean like a man; they cannot see things as a man; they behold everything through a different lense from what men do; men look at the cold, naked facts; women see everything through their sensibilities, their sympathy, their affections, their tears."

He paused, lifted his hands, palms downward, and brought them down on the two arms of the chair. The arms of the chair represented the party addressed. He waited to see if the effect had been what he anticipated. The expression about his tightly compressed lips seemed to say, "Are you squelched?"

The trained mind of a woman has about it a something, a power, that a man does not possess. It comes from her constant rally and struggle of her intellectual forces, and will-power over the weaknesses of her physical, her mind has that elasticity, that tense, nervy fiber that can spring again and thrust, that is wholly lacking in man.

There was a far-away, dreamy look in her eye that seemed to say "All for Hecuba, and what's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?" To a woman's untrained mind, to a woman not accustomed to pit herself against the shafts of man's wit, railery, sarcasm, and epigram, the Judge's oft repeated fling at woman might have been a squelcher, but not so with a woman so fathered and so educated. With the calm dignity, and composure that she had inherited from him, she held to her question. "Do you think your answer responsive?"

There was nothing that could put the Judge so much, and so quickly on his mettle as to remind him, even in the most trivial matter, that he had not "followed the rule," the law. The look that he now cast at her, simply showed how completely, entirely, wholly, thoroughly, and absolutely, the man, the lawyer, the judge, was one-sided in his views, his education, his thoughts, "let me see" — as though there was a dual person in his mind, — the one of which said to the other, "you was talking to a woman about a woman, the law you know don't apply to her," "what was your question?"

She put it in a milder form, "Which do you regard as of the most value, which would you rescue first, the house or the builder?

He answered her almost savagely, by asking another question, "Did John Ashton make the law?"

Her calm reply was, "No, but in all probability he was the equal, if not the superior, of the men that did."

He looked at her, half enraged, half quizzical, as much as to say, "Not squelched yet?"

His discretion suggested the foil of man's superiority, and from behind that he grumbled again, "You can't reason with a woman." That was what he said audibly, but to his inner consciousness he was saying, "Woe to that man who pits his cold, naked facts against the strong current of a woman's will, backed with her quick intuition, her sympathy, her sensibility, her tears, her affections, her heart."

Somehow, it was the "woman's last word" that had hit the mark full and fair in the center, the arrow was still quivering in his mind, "You know as a lawyer, Julia, that we can not countenance such things; while the law is in force, we must see that it is enforced."

"True, father, but is not there something higher than the law at times — is there not equity?"

Judge Bullion always had supreme contempt for the chancellor, and he answered her in the exact language of that eminent jurist, who had never been heard to swear until the occasion of this answer, "Equity? What is equity, damn equity."

The man who makes answer with an oath is either lying or admitting that he is defeated or both, usually both.

The Judge was again being judged by the law's blind judgment. It had so many years ago condemned the outrush of his heart, his soul, as an unholy passion, that the murderous thought was again saying to the ghost that had

so many times crossed his path, "Shake not thy gory locks at me."

When the law makes the law-maker a sinner, every out-lash of transgression by the creator against the creature must sooner or later be followed by the sharp, quick, keen, backward stroke of repentance. It was the keen, quick, sensitive mind of the Judge pressing itself hard against the sharp, rugged, bristling, thorny customs, prejudices, and precedents of the dead past.

He felt again the strong hand of this tyrant laid heavily upon him, he felt its cold, clamy fingers again clutching at the throat of his pride. Law, marriage, descent, and distribution, were again in a death struggle with hearts, love, and humanity.

Heart's desires, burning passions, winged persuasions, splendors and glooms, veiled destinies, glimmering incarnations of hopes and flying fears have never yet been compassed about with imaginary lines, imaginary environments, imaginary moates and dikes buttressed however strong with fanciful walls of threatened and threatening fire.

Judge Bullion was so completely imbued with the idea of the creature's power, that to break away from its leashes was to become himself the associate, the aider, the abettor, of crime and criminals.

Prejudices become ligatures that bind the mind to error and darkness with such power and strength that it takes the utmost intensity of heat and light to set us free. The man deeply absorbed in the game often is blind to the move that

the looker-on sees would check-mate his antagonist. It was Judge Bullion's game. He had often said, "Check"—his breath would fail, the other word would die on his lips.

The wrangling, the disputation, is not so much about what the law *is* as what effect it will have when applied to this or that interest to be affected by the application. This was the precise difficulty between these two partners.

Judge Bullion did not desire the death of John Ashton; but on the other hand desired and was anxious to have him liberated, acquitted; but he was so much the slave of the creature that he would murder the creator rather than abate one jot or tittle of the creature's prerogative. It was the Shylock of his profession that had captivated his humanity and continually said, "Was it not so nominated in the bond?"

He had often held the scales of justice and meted out the measurement to contending and conflicting interests of litigants; but never until now had he been called upon to see himself so placed in the scales against himself; on the one side was his heart, his love; on the other side his pride, his slavish adherence to undefinable dread; to the air-drawn dagger of the invisible personage—custom, precedent, law. What he only half suspected before was clear to him now: Julia had laid the plans; Ashton had executed them. If he should succeed in evading the sentence would she seek him? In their banishment he foresaw all his former solicitude, his dread, his life-long fear, his expected happening.

He saw his mistake; he had disclosed his mind. She would not take him into her confidence for the future; hence-

forth he stood for the law; she for the rescue. He could not stand any the worse; he inquired her intentions. She had divined his purpose. She would put him on the track. If he communicated the scent to the detectives all the better.

He well knew that cross examination would be a two-edged sword that was likely to cut both ways. He would simply ask a question; make a very commonplace inquiry.

In the most innocent manner he asked, "What are your plans for the summer, daughter?"

She was equally as guileless. "I think of going to Europe in June, father."

He thought she had told him something of importance. In his mind he said, "Not as shrewd as I gave you credit with being."

This last answer was so successful that he concluded another venture. "Has John actually sailed?" He thought he saw her blush.

"Sailed?"

"Yes; gone to Europe?"

"I hope he is there long ere this."

His whole frame shuddered, his eyes brightened. "I must go see him."

"Really?"

"Truly."

"You are jesting, are you not, father?"

"Jesting, no indeed."

"It was but a short time ago that you would hand him over to the law as a fugitive from justice. I see" — with a

tinge of bitterness in the remark — "you wish to find him that you may offer him protection, such as vultures offer lambs."

The situation was getting embarrassing; the subject was dropped.

When a man's life, and happiness, and pride are all wrapped up in a single subject, he can't long remain silent in the presence of the one who holds the key to the situation. Judge Bullion saw in this declaration of his daughter, the danger that must be avoided, to allow these two people to secrete themselves for the remainder of their lives, was the one object of his life to prevent. Ashton was at home in Europe, both in England and France; and, in fact, anywhere on the continent. His education, his life as a boy made him a Frenchman in manners and tastes, and his knowledge of Italian, and Spanish, and German, was such that he could go anywhere at will, and be as much at home as in America.

The whole subject was a painful one to Judge Bullion's mind; in his attempt to have Fred Bullion push his claim and have Julia commit herself, he had brought on this fatal disaster to his hopes, and the destruction of her happiness, and the jeopardy of Ashton's life. Affairs could not well be in a worse condition. Why not sound her mind on this matter at once and know the worst? If she was disposed to marry Fred, why not know it and put at rest this much annoying subject? If this could be accomplished then she might go to Europe with his blessing, and the sooner she

met Ashton and informed him of her union with Fred, the better.

Julia's mind was absorbed in the contemplation of an entirely different subject, she was somewhat startled when her father approached her. He arose from where he was sitting, crossed the room, and stood by her side, his left hand thrust into his pantaloon pocket, his right nervously dangling the fob on his watch chain. "Julia, I was just thinking of a matter that deeply concerns us both—" he hesitated, Fred Bullion's name had not been mentioned by either of them to the other since that fatal day in November last—"I was thinking of inviting Fred to dinner tomorrow." She grew deathly pale. Her brow was firmly knit, her beautiful face at that moment was not pleasing to look upon, she hesitated a moment to have him go on with his thought, for she saw that he had purposely stopped to calculate what the effect of that name would be on her mind. The effect had so startled him that he was in no mood to go on. She saw her opportunity. "I can't see how his being at dinner is a matter that concerns *me deeply*;"—with great stress on the last words—"in fact, I don't see that it concerns me at all."

"You astonish me."

"You pain me."

"Why?"

"Because, I have no desire to see him, much less to dine with him." The tone and feeling betrayed in the words of that last utterance were more significant than the words

themselves. The Judge saw how completely he had failed. *Not yet.*

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

No man of Judge Bullion's pride has ever submitted gracefully to the teaching of woman. She may lead him whithersoever she will, so long as she does not impress him with the fact that he is doing her bidding. If he but follows his own sweet will, it makes no difference what has gone before, but to be taught, catechised, by a woman is to invite open revolt. She may suggest, point out, call his attention to certain things which he may have forgotten, or possibly overlooked, but do not invade the precincts of his sacred prerogative to teach. His nature says ever, "behold the man."

Judge Bullion felt that in this passage of arms with his daughter he had the worst of it, and so long as that thought burned in his mind he could not be at ease. True, he did not seek a quarrel; but rather than be burdened with this feeling he was willing to risk his peace of mind; probably his happiness.

Why did his daughter manifest so much feeling at the mention of Fred Bullion's name? Did she suspect that Fred had anything to do with the murder of Dr. Arlington? Impossible. He would as soon suspect Ashton as Fred. Her tone, her pained look, her very gesture warned him against mentioning that name again; he must await developments

that would clear away all suspicions that Fred was in any way implicated. Would it be safe to attempt to bring them together? Hardly. He concluded to see Fred; consult him; carry some word of his to her sore and lacerated mind; something to convince her that Fred was in sympathy with her in her distress.

On the morning following, as he was about to go to his study from the breakfast table, he said in his off-hand way, "Julia, as you do not care to dine with Fred, I will be forced to ask him to postpone his call until we are quite assured of — of" — she completed the sentence for him; "of his being an accessory before the fact in the murder of Dr. Arlington."

He was astounded with her boldness. "What! a Bullion do such a thing?"

"Yes, father, Bullions have done such things."

"Was the woman mad?" She saw how deeply the iron had penetrated his soul, and her bitterness gave place to regret.

"Not with daggers, but just as effectually;" there was more of sadness than anger in this reply.

When the world says that which is uncomplimentary of us, we often console ourselves with the consciousness that we are possessed of the knowledge of other facts that if known would be more uncomplimentary still. He suspected that she may have caught a glimpse of the skeleton in his closet; but she did not know its history, and that consoled him.

If Judge Bullion had never before felt the truth of the

adage at the head of this chapter, he was now more than fully convinced of it. He was the man; the partner was the master of the situation.

CHAPTER XVIII

"First to the father who engenders, then to the mother who gives birth, then to the master who rears, then to the city that civilizes, then to the country which is the mother supreme, then to humanity who is the great ancestor."

TO the fellow feeling that makes the suffering humanity of the world brothers, Julia owed everything in her successful carrying out of her plans; that made it possible for Ashton to escape. Without the aid of Mary, the nameless, she would have failed utterly, in all human probability. She had found much to thank God for in the lives of those who are leading, or rather suffering, a life of sin, because the laws of society have so decreed it. She had taken much interest in the good accomplished for the hopelessly poor by the contributors of the "Open Air Fund." She had decided to go among the occupants of the tenement houses and make a selection out of the vast number of unfortunates, and give them the benefits of the fresh air.

With this thought in her mind she took up her way along the same route one April day that she had gone in the month of November, but with a much lighter heart, though not entirely free from dread. She was aware that detectives were on her track, that they would follow her wherever she went. Strategy wins, because its very boldness has made the impossible its peculiar hand-maid; she

had verified this before, and was now willing to stake all on this view again.

Therefore, with seeming unconcern, she walked leisurely along and went direct to Mary's place. Neither to the right nor the left, did she cast a glance. She mounted the outside stairs as before, and again the door was opened to her. How different this meeting from the one described in a former chapter. The two women rushed into each other's arms. The virgin maiden and the magdalene have again met on the same plain. Wherever the blood-stained foot-prints of the sufferer, who carries new crosses up new Calvarys, leaves traces of bleeding feet, their legal fictions, customs and conventionalities, harping over supposed goodness and super-posed virtue, pale and fade in pityless gloom.

The common mission of doing something for the good of humanity has ever made the world kin. A few hasty congratulations, a few thoughts exchanged and both women plunged headlong into the subject uppermost in their minds. What would they do for Kate and the children? They must be provided for first. Julia had not seen Kate as yet, face to face; would they both call upon her? Mary hesitated. Would it be the proper thing fur Julia Bullion to be seen on the street with the most noted *demi monde* of the locality?

"You know," said Julia, "how we used to gloat over the big, brave words of Emerson's 'scorn appearances and you always may.' Well, that is what I am going to do to-day; that is what I am going to do to-morrow; and that is what I am going to continue doing until I have shown the

world that a woman can be a woman regardless of the hypocritical cant that seeks to bind her to the shreds and patches that have so long covered the ulcers and blotches on the rotten old carcass of the dead past."

"Brave words, brave words, Julia, but then the world don't respect you for being brave."

"Let it do its worst then, and I will still be a woman."

"Since you are so gracious as to insist on my accompanying you I am delighted beyond measure to accept, and by way of recompense I will give you an introduction to my old German friend on the same floor with Kate."

"Your old German friend?"

"Yes, real German."

"You amaze me! Have you gone into wholesale charity? First a street gamin, then an entire family, now an old German!"

"Yes, a real old German; he will delight you exceedingly."

"Can he talk English?"

"No one has heard him utter even a word of English. It makes me think of our school days."

"Is he a professor?"

"Not exactly; but he is wonderfully well posted, and takes a great interest in public affairs; reads all the papers he can lay his hands upon. I think he saw Ashton the night of his escape."

Julia raised her finger as if she feared they might be heard by some one.

"We are perfectly safe *here*," said Mary. "You could pour out your secret to every girl in the place, and it would be as safe with them as with you and me. We have lost every thing but honor and truthfulness, and we cling to that as we do to life."

They found Kate much improved in health and strength. The two older boys had been braver since they were clothed and had full stomachs. They were battling manfully, and were almost able to provide for the entire family. "Jaw-smith-Jim" was trying hard to pull himself out from under that sobriquet. Kate was quite overcome at the meeting.

"It was so kind in you girls to fix me up so well before you came to call on me," said Kate smilingly. "You know I won't tell you how much I thank you for what you have done, for that would be impossible."

"Don't mention it," said Mary.

"Yes, but I must; I feel so much better this spring. I am braver, yet I shudder sometimes, though the sunshine looks like the rise of Austerlitz; I tremble lest its setting be that of Waterloo."

"At it again," said Mary.

"Well, I cannot help it," said Kate. "You see, Julia, Mary has an old German friend next door, and he just whiles away hour after hour for me with his delightful talk about those old time subjects that used to so fill me with delight. He just makes one feel that he was personally acquainted with Dumas, Hugo, and Goethe. You will let Julia see him, won't you, Mary?"

"Yes, if she is good."

"We will just call on Mary's old German friend for a minute, and see what he is most in need of, and then I want to see you on business."

"On business! It has been so long since I have heard that word business that it has fled from my vocabulary," said Kate.

Julia and Mary called upon the old man. Julia made a note of the few little necessaries that he most stood in need of, and they took their leave. To the old man's mind and vision they were angels.

CHAPTER XIX

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."

JULIA announced to Kate her intention to make the Hamilton Brothers, bankers, disgorge their plunder.

"It is so much like you, Julia," cried Kate. "Oh, if you only could. Will your father help you, Julia?"

"Poor little goose," said Julia, "my father help me?"

"Don't you think it is about time that we should stand alone? I am an advocate for equality, and not for identity, simply, as somebody's. My thought is that this is a day of progress; that *one* and *one* are two. It is my purpose to call upon your brothers; lay your case before them; show them that I can prove that you are their sister; furnish them with the *data* from the days they came to see you graduate until this moment; that I can as clearly establish your identity as they can their own; that you are no 'Tichbourne claimant.'"

The last words were spoken with the air of the professional lawyer that brought a smile from Mary. She clapped her hands and shouted, "Ten Thousand a Year." "Quirk, Gammon & Snap." "Julia, are you the 'Oily Gammon' of your firm?"

"There is no gammon about this; I will do all that I promise, as sure as fate."

On the following morning she went to the banking house of the Hamilton Brothers, bankers. She would have been glad to have had them recognize the claim of their sister at once and do her the speedy justice that she was entitled to; but then again there was two sides; two fronts to the shield. She wanted a foil to throw the detectives off her track. If she was compelled to bring suit to recover, then the public would know all about it and she could go at will through the tenement house and not be shadowed by the detectives.

She presented Kate's claims to the brothers. Her words were daggers to their hearts, they raved and stormed and cursed and swore that they never would pay one dollar to any imposter claiming to be their sister, and that they would spend half their fortune before they would submit to being robbed. Julia promptly filed her bill in chancery and began taking testimony. Before many days were spent in gathering evidence the brothers deemed it wise to make overtures for settlement. Julia said something about agreeing quickly with thine adversary in the way lest, etc. That the etc. had arrived, and that the only course by which she could see her way clear was to insist on their paying to their sister the last farthing, and they did.

As Julia had foreseen, this course left her as free to come and go among the tenement house people as though she had never been implicated in the plot whereby Ashton had succeeded in gaining his freedom. She called upon Mary's old German friend without let or hinderance.

In the meantime she was not idle. If John Ashton was not morally bound to discover the party who had committed the murder the law would still seek to reek its vengeance upon him. Steps were immediately taken to find some clue to the tragedy that hung over the life of such a man and such a woman.

Julia carried out her declaration made to her father to go to Europe in June. She went. Somewhat to her surprise no detective followed. She kept up a correspondence with Mary, inclosing a letter always to her old German friend.

CHAPTER XX

"Let others flatter crime where it sits throned
In brief omnipotence! Secure are they;
For justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err."

THE man who boasts of man's superiority over woman simply says thereby that he has never crossed with a woman who is a strategist; for when he does he will change his mind. It is nature's law that the strong and powerful are slow, heavy, ponderous; while the weaker are fleet of foot and nimble. The minds that are not backed with powerful and muscular bodies have been provided and endowed with far more cunning and strategic power.

Julia took her departure for Europe the middle of June, and was in London by July first. She had before going secured the best detective talent in the land to ferret out the instigators and perpetrators of the murder of Dr. Arlington, and to keep her posted as to the movements of those who still sought to compass the apprehension and recapture of Ashton. For shame be it, that there are in this advanced civilization sleuth-hounds, not of the law, but of crime, themselves criminals.

"Ministers of pain and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust and hate,
And clinging crime, and as lean dogs pursue
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn."

These parasites of men

"Track all things that weep and bleed and live."

By September, Julia was satisfied that it would be safe for Ashton to join her in the Alps. She prepared for his coming.

As proof of Julia Bullion's strategic power, let the reader but consider the part she has played in this tragedy. Her first visit to Mary's place, which had long been known to her, was premeditated. She was also acquainted with the whereabouts of Kate Hamilton. She had kept trace of these beautiful and handsomest of her school-day friends. She had communicated to Ashton by means of short-hand, at which both were experts, and could translate each the other's notes; her views and the possibilities of finding, with these two former friends, a secure hiding place. He as promptly answered that if he did escape and was afterward recaptured he would be hanged. Her laconic reply was, "You'll be hanged if you don't." He mused and pondered and dreamed over this view of the situation, and after due deliberation, replied, "It is betweeen the devil and the deep sea; it can't be any the worse, make the arrangements."

Julia's view of the case was this: Call upon Mary, enlist her in the enterprise if possible, for she must have a confederate; have Mary engage a room in the tenement house and take the place of Ashton in the carriage, and drive to the city of C. disguised as Ashton.

To all of her plans Mary readily assented. Julia had her go to another city and procure the wig and gray beard

and gray slouch hat described in a former chapter. She met Ashton as he emerged from the jail and gave him this disguise as he passed from the alley to the place where he found the team in waiting, she exchanging hats with him and taking the closed carriage, and he following the direction before given the "old German."

The detectives had been as completely check-mated and thrown off the trail as if Ashton had gone in a hole in the ground. The role of the old German friend was played by Ashton with such consummate skill that no one ever suspected him as being Ashton. Added to this disguise was the place he occupied. So completely is the tenement house victim cut off from society that Ashton was as absolutely buried as if he had been sunk in mid-ocean.

By the timely and handsome manner in which Julia had rescued Kate Hamilton from this living hell she had disarmed all suspicion as to Ashton being in that vicinity, if there had been any suspicion entertained that he was still in this couutry. Then her early departure for Europe made him comparatively safe in his hiding place. When the proper time came for his departure he had gone to Castle Garden, and when a favorable opportunity presented itself, represented himself as one of the paupers just arrived, and requested that he be returned to his native land. The ruse worked like a charm, and Ashton made his escape without the least suspicion attaching to his departure. Julia had kept up a correspondence with Kate and Mary without being suspected by the detectives, and they had in turn commun-

icated all necessary information to Ashton; and it was with very little difficulty that they met in Paris in the early part of September.

But the law was not satisfied as yet. Ashton, with the aid of a woman possessed of great strategic forethought, had played his Austerlitz on the chess board of life; might not his next move prove his Elba, his Waterloo, his St. Helena?

To two such minds, fugitives from justice was the most galling yoke to be borne. After securing a hiding place for Ashton, Julia returned home; just one year from the date on which Dr. Arlington had met his death.

CHAPTER XXI

"Providence conducts to maturity, by the law of universal life, men, things, and events."

ASHTON'S jail delivery had a double effect: it took him out of harm's way for at least the time being, and roused the latent talent of the detectives. These man-hunters having lost the scent on one trail, were now diligently in search of some other. Their deep-mouthed baying had the effect to scare up one or two suspected parties, with no other result than to have them in durance vile for a short time and then turn them out.

The real murderer had been roused from his lair, he began to bestir himself. Julia had put this and that together; she reasoned that the perpetrator had been an expert at disguising himself and personating Ashton. She was fully satisfied that the man who procured the dagger obtained it in that way. The next thing was to find how the man succeeded in getting into the private office and the means by which he had escaped. He had a key to the side door, no doubt, and the next thing was to find where that had been made. She put the detectives on this clue. A year dulls the memory of the average man, and no one could tell anything about it or what had been done in their places of business a year before.

If the real perpetrator was not apprehended by this

much-beating about the bush it would lead to suicide or flight.

The criminal classes are the children of darkness, and in their day and generation they are wiser than the children of light. It is truly wonderful how much the criminals of this country know both as to the law and the procedure in the courts, the grades of crime and the penalties attached.

It has often been observed that one-half of the world does not know how the other half lives. It is equally as true that nine-tenths of the American people do not know who are their next door neighbors. If our forefathers were wonderfully ignorant of the scope and extent of this goodly land, their descendants know but little more about its length and breadth, its plains, its rivers, its lakes, its mountain fastnesses. Yet with all its vastness it is wonderful how the story of each individual's life follows after him, and how unexpectedly ghosts seem to arise from the abyss.

To day the pine-clad hills of New England, and the treeless plains of the Mississippi valley, and the trackless sands of the golden shores are nearer neighbors than Boston and Providence were in colonial days. The New England traveler "plunges into the sunlit glory of the Sacramento and thunders on through the fairest fields of the continent toward the infant colossus of cities sitting serenely by the side of earth's mightiest ocean," while yet the moisture of his prattling babe's cheek, nestling in its

Atlantic home, is still fresh upon his lips. Land of wonder and of love!

Two men stood on the shores of Puget Sound, early in the month of June. They looked round them, they could hardly realize that eight days before they had exchanged glances as they wandered through the old "Boston Common." Their meeting then had been by chance, strange that they next should meet in this to, them, secluded spot. If they had slept the entire journey they could easily have argued themselves into believing that they were now in some New England town. The language of the men about them had not even a sound that was not perfectly familiar to their ears. The hotel at which they had breakfasted was called the "New England Hotel," and how home-like. Even the real "Boston Baked Beans" had found their way to that coast. How suggestive these three "B's" be? But another name for the blood, brains and bullion of Boston.

As these two men stood on the wharves of that busy, bustling, enterprising city and watched the ships as they came and went, the immense quantities of freight, its destination, New York, Boston, San Francisco, Australia, the Sandwich Islands, and the thousand and one intermediate points, there was a marked contrast in the different expression of the two faces. The thoughts that were going through their minds were very different, but at last leading to the same end.

It is so natural now-days to be separated from your neighbor by nothing but a brick wall, and hurry by him

morning, noon and night for days, weeks, months and years and not know even his name; and when separated from home by thousands of miles of sea and land to feel that you have found a brother when by chance you stumble on to a fellow townsman. How communicative you are, and at the same time how sneakingly mean the past looks to you as you think back over the days you have passed that neighbor without a nod, without a smile, without a word. Then you realize why the traveled people are the social as well as the cultured people. Then you make high resolves and vows that when at home again that you will even apologize to your neighbor's dog for your unfriendliness only to see how soon your tentacles for brotherly love begin to shrink and draw back as you near home.

As the two men stood contemplating the surroundings that evening in June an immense bank of clouds of dark marine blue slowly lifted their bulky and huge forms skyward. As they spread out and filled the entire western heaven they were crowded for space, and seemed pushing closer and closer together until their colossal peaks loomed up and stood out so clear, so well defined, so dark against the illimitable expanse of heaven's blue that they looked veritable peaks; then the two strangers turned and cast a glance backward at "Old Ranier" that had for centuries sparkled with its ice covered, snow capped summit in every returning springtime's sunlight; then for the first time they realized and comprehended that greatness and grandeur are only relative. One of earth's oldest, loftiest, and grandest

solitary peaks; rock-ribbed and crystalized with centuries of ice, and snow, and storm, and sunshine had shrunken into a mere speck, a mole hill, compared with these gigantic outlines, that only flecked as it were the merest point in the broad expanse of immensity.

They look again. Now the entire western heaven is obscured; this dark monster has moved up until it has reached the zenith. How imposing, how magnificently grand, this great world of darkness looms up. From whence? Whither? It is the frown of the Infinite. How majestically it rises out of the inane; how calmly it will settle into the abyss.

Now, each separate peak seems touched with glory round its well defined edges; first, there is the steel gray of the early dawn; then the roseate tints of morning; not brightening into white light, but empurpled until as if incarnadined with an ocean of blood; streaked with great rivers of crimson, touched off from the bright red with orange, yellow, blue that melts again into blue-black. It is the sporting of the Master's pencil. One majestic line and all this is changed. The silvery peaks dissolve, and melt, and roll down the illimitable blue and fleck the purple sides with their kindling light-like spray that dashes over the ocean's purple wave. The dark abyss is now a sparkling fountain of red and gold; where a moment ago the sharp peaks stood out so defiantly and boldly, mountains are now piled up; peak buried beneath rising peak.

At the horizon the dark, solid masses begin to break

away, forming an archway through which the light seems to be struggling. Just over this archway, high in the heavens, there is a rift in the great banks; the heavy masses are separating; the dark purple front shows a silvery lining in the back-ground. The breach is widening from the zenith toward the horizon. Huge massive cliffs project out into the opening, luminous with light and shadow. On the right these jutting cliffs stand almost upright, one above the other, until they are as high as heaven. Then they begin to spread out into thin, fleecy canopy — white, and gray, and blue, and red, and move off toward the receding masses on the left. Here the huge bulks that had separated from those on the right were toppling over each other in chaotic sport. The dark purple fronts reflected their colors upon the brighter light back of them, until bronze, and blue, and gray, and orange, and yellow, and red, all commingled as if struggling for the mastery. Immense caverns, deep gorges, and wide valleys shone superbly grand between the front banks and the higher mountains that had reared their heads in the back-ground.

On the right, the strong light was chasing away the barriers. Large, filmy streaks of concentrated sunlit flakes were suspended in mid-heaven, their changing forms and sides reminding the observer of dissolving views. While on the left the perpendicular mountains showed a bold front; the light striking full and fair against the sides, lighting up every chink and cranny until they looked frosted with hoary headed age. The purple blue came up so bold, so strong against

the illumined edges that it semed as though the veil of the Infinite was being thrown over the sombre clouds of dark night. Then still farther in the distance weird mountains rose until whole peaks stood out clear and bold and white as snow. And over all this was white flecks of vapory clouds, a veil of mellow light. O strange, grand, luminous sight, such a disporting of the Infinite is never again "the prey of setting suns," will never be "blurred with mist of after-thought."

The two strangers drew closer together in this, to them, strange land, the approaching night seemed to make them nearer akin. The gray, eagle eye of the short, thick-set man looked up searchingly into the face of his taller, younger companion. As the stout man's soft, sleek hand deftly crept between the coat-sleeve of his companion and his body, and lay confidingly on the fore-arm, his experienced hand felt a shiver running through that tall, slight frame by his side. With half smile and half question that gray eye again peered into the face above it. How blanched and ghastly it looked now. "See, what did you say your name was?" asked the stout thick set man.

"Pickins."

"Your given name?"

"James," he bethought himself, "James F.," slightly coloring. "The F's for Ferguson, I usually write it J. Ferguson when away from home, omitting the Pickins entirely."

That very pointed little question mark almost escaped the lips of the stout man but he caught it in his teeth. "O,

yes, J. Ferguson, Boston, that's the way you registered; I remember now, how stupid for me to ask."

J. Ferguson was a tall, slender man with square shoulders, very straight and erect, with light, springy, elastic step that bespoke strong nervous tension, the air of an athlete, trained and developed muscle, not large, but of iron tenacity, keen black eyes that were shaded by heavy dark brown brows, square forehead, high and clear, hair of jet black, drooping mustaches, same color, that half concealed his mouth, which marked the man, and plainly said, a hero if need be, a man of intellectual mould, of high resolve; a power for good if started in the right direction; a powerful villain if once in the meshes of sin and wrong. A graduate of one of the best of the eastern universities, having carried off the honors of his class. The life and soul of his team in the rush for the ball, a strong oar in his crew.

The color came and went on that finely-moulded face as he sat on a pile of lumber that evening in June and gazed out on the deep, rolling waters of Puget Sound. He was musing, forgetful of his companion's presence; his mind had gone back to his New England home; his victories in the boat races on other waters. The splashing waves sent the spray up in his face. It roused him from his revery. He drew his elegant silk handkerchief from his breast pocket, wiped the salty foam from his lips, startled and amazed, as one just waking from healthful sleep. "Salt! by Jove," said he, "and so cool; tide water, sure as your born." His outstretched hand held his handkerchief. He let it fall, re-

covered it, and let it rest lightly on his knee; a corner stirred by the breeze slipped out, falling down over his leg revealed the initials "J. Q. L."

He took no notice of himself; he was thinking of old ocean, its tides, its sunshine and storm; thoughts stirred by the rushing waters of the incoming tide. His companion was studying him, taking note of his every action. Turning sharply round to the stout man at his side, "Did you know that we were on the arm of the Pacific?" "It had not occurred to me before."

The color of his face that showed so plainly when his companion inquired for his name but a short time before deepened as he discovered that the initials of his handkerchief had been seen by the piercing gray eyes of the man at his elbow.

He arose quickly, looked at a small sail boat just approaching the wharf near by, and suggested that they take a walk as the air was getting quite cool. They strolled up by the plaza, then to the higher ground on up by the university building and back to the hotel.

Mr. Ferguson had the air of a man ill-at-ease; his stout companion wore a self-satisfied look.

"I am very much fatigued," said Ferguson. "I will be obliged to deprive myself of the pleasure of your company for the balance of the evening," he said to his stout companion, and with a slight waive of the hand and a graceful bow, remarked "pleasant dreams to you, good-night."

"Life, like a dome of many colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity."

CHAPTER XXII

"When the earth is suffering from an excessive burden, there are mysterious groans from the shadow, which the abyss hears."

THE busy, pulsing, throbbing mart of Seattle was a far different place from what the university man of New England had pictured in his mind. From being a quiet, secluded spot where he might find some of the creature comforts and more seclusion from the prying eyes of men, he found it a thriving, growing, populous city. Instead of a few light canoes of the Indian gliding swiftly over the waters of this inland sea, he found the lords of the deep plowing through its salty foam, riding safely at anchor in one of the finest and safest land-locked harbors on the globe. He found besides familiar New England names, faces, books, papers, periodicals, lawyers, doctors, college professors, merchants, bankers, artisans, and more than all that, a keen, shrewd yankee, just from home, who seemed bent on covering his very footsteps with question marks. What did he mean?

On the morrow he would take the necessary steps to separate himself from this man. Companions are agreeable in a strange land if they are not so deeply concerned in finding out more about your business than they are interested in sight-seeing. "How painfully penetrating his looks," remarked Ferguson to himself.

"Old Lynxy" had observed that Ferguson was a little

restive on parting that evening and he was the first to say that he would not go out the following morning according to the arrangements the evening previous to enjoy a horse-back ride to lake Washington. Ferguson was inwardly pleased, but as politeness always does, puts its lie in the wrong place, covered his satisfaction with a faint shadow of outward disappointment, and remarked that he regretted exceedingly that he would not have the pleasure of his company, but as he had engaged the horses he would go and settle the bill for both and set out with a guide. The liveryman furnished him with two good horses, an intelligent stable boy as a companion, and he was soon on his way to this beautiful, now suburban, lake.

Ferguson made good use of his eyes, his ears, and memory. The boy had been "up and down the sound," and knew every nook and corner from Tacoma to the straits of Juan De Fucca. Ferguson was in better spirits when he returned to his hotel late in the evening. He felt sure that he had gained a few points that would enable him to elude "Old Lynxy."

He kept his own counsels, however, and on the following day secured his companion of the previous one for a pull on the water. The boy developed such a wonderful amount of "pay dirt," as he would himself say, that Ferguson determined after the "white ash" breeze to start the wind in another quarter. The result was "a blow out" with the boys. Ferguson retired later in the night than he had done

since his arrival on the coast, with considerable more experience and a correspondingly lessened "roll" of the needful.

He breakfasted rather late the following morning, and on going into the office was somewhat relieved to learn that his stout friend from the east had paid his bill and gone "up the sound." This was a sufficiently good reason for him to go "down the sound." Accordingly he went by the next regular boat, leaving at nine o'clock in the evening.

Ferguson's ruling passion was gambling. He had squandered an immense patrimony left him by a deceased uncle. He had been able to gather up enough to get to the "wild and wooly west," as he supposed, thinking that he could regain his lost fortune over the "green cloth," and return to the east, where he conceived the wise men originally came from and still lived. He had found Seattle very different from the picture he had drawn in his imagination, in fact, his picture of the north-west was only wholly of the imagination, and in no way would apply to anything he had seen. Even the gambling was conducted on an entirely different basis from that he had been accustomed to see and engage in; the noble red man was not the superior type of humanity he had pictured him to be. In fact, he was lost to know how so many of his New England brethren who had left handsome, intelligent, cultured women and bright, prattling babes in their civilized homes, could so far forget themselves, their manhood, and Christian teachings, and influences, as to desert these same wives and children and rear families of half-breeds with hideous faced "flat head

Squaws" for mothers. The greatest reproach that could be heaped upon one of these dusky maidens of the forest being "your mother was too lazy to flatten your head."

At seven in the morning following the evening whereon he had left Seattle, the boat rounded-to at Port Ludlow; he was not particularly struck with the appearance of this little collection of cottages, so he inquired for the next landing; and was told that it was Port Gamble. That name had charms for him, it was suggestive; strange that he had not observed that name when he was looking over the map for an objective point to drop down upon. He inquired the reason for such a name being selected for a town on the Sound. He manifested more than ordinary interest in the town when he learned that the place had formerly been known as Teekalet, but that owing to the fact that it had become notorious for its gambling the name was changed to the more appropriate one of "Gamble." This was the place of all others that he was looking for, and in a very short space of time Port Gamble appeared in sight as the steamer rounded one of the many points on the Sound. It was but a few minutes until the landing was made and Ferguson was on his way to the only hotel in the place, the "Teekalet House."

He noticed the same scrawling hand of "Old Lynxy" that he had observed on the hotel register at Seattle. He inquired for the man who had registered as John Anderson. He was pointed out to him in a few minutes by the clerk. The sleek-headed, smooth-faced Yankee now wore a heavy

beard of iron gray, a gray wig, and gray suit of clothes to match. If this disguise was intended to deceive Ferguson it had failed utterly, for no sooner had Ferguson caught sight of him than he recognized his man. It was now his turn to chaff "Old Lynxy" on his change of appearance and name. This he did in a cool, nonchalence way that almost caused "Old Lynxy" to doubt his former judgment as to whether he was on the trail of the right man.

"When did you come down?" said Ferguson.

"Has it been so long ago that you needs must ask?" answered "Old Lynxy."

"The clerk at the New England told me that you had gone up the sound; but I felt sure that I should find you in just the opposite direction, for that is characteristic of the down-easter, you know," said Ferguson

The manner of Ferguson at the time was the thing that puzzled his stout companion more than what he said; for now he was all smiles, and his sombre look had fled and no man could be gayer.

"Have something," said Ferguson.

"Don't care if I do," said "Old Lynxy."

"Name your pizen," said Ferguson.

"Whisky."

"Two straights," said Ferguson.

They drank, and after a few common-place remarks Ferguson withdrew; he was anxious to see the town and learn from what source he might expect the revenue from which a man in his line was to draw his supplies. His stout

companion was equally anxious to know more of his friend who registered as Ferguson and carried a handkerchief with initials that did not correspond with the initials of his name. He at once sought out a man he had observed getting off the boat on which Ferguson had been a passenger ; of him he made inquiries as to his friend while coming from Seattle. "Old Lynxy" learned that Ferguson had been drinking some and had gambled nearly all the night, and seemed anxious to reach Gamble. The stranger remarked to "Old Lynxy" that his friend had a sort of wild gleam in his eyes when he talked of gambling. "A profesh 'spose."

"We'll see," remarked "Lynxy."

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The bar and gambling room at this resort is one long room with billiard tables down the center of the floor, and the card tables strung along the sides of the room, with the bar in one corner.

The occasions, on which the most money changes hands of late years, are when the mill-men employed in the saw mills of The Puget Mill Company are paid off. The Saturday nights and Sundays, and Sunday nights are simply pandemonium let loose.

Ferguson had come at the opportune time. The men were to be paid off that day, and he was ready for the fray. The game was one he had never seen played in the east, but being as he said "a slick carder," he had picked up some of the points and had decided to take a hand at the first favor-

able opportunity. Among the rules of the game at that time were these—"no borrowing, no lending, playing your pile in sight"—the latter expression meaning that each player must place the sum he desires to hazard on the game on the table where it can be seen before he "sits in" to play. The game is known as "stud poker" and is what a gambler would term, a game for table stakes—that is, no one is allowed to borrow or lend to another while engaged in the game and placing the entire amount in sight of all the players before the cards are dealt.

The dealer shuffles the cards and without cutting, deals each player a single card, face down—which is said to be buried—this the player is allowed to look at before he anties. All cards dealt after this first, are dealt face up, so that all the players have an opportunity to see what the others have in their hands, with the exception of the first one dealt.

The knowledge of what the player has buried, the cards in sight, and those still in the dealer's hands, give rise to varied ranges of probabilities and speculations ; skill in manipulating the paste-board ; judgment and cool calculation, together with nerve and the nature of the men in the game; what they will do under the strong feeling of the moment, all combined with coolness and the power to read the thoughts of antagonists as betrayed in their faces and actions, tend to make this a game peculiarly interesting to the minds of Ferguson's make-up.

In Rome, Ferguson would do as the Romans did. In company with a pack of wolves he would howl the equal of any

of them. He selected the table at which he thought he saw the best chance of winning, after making the rounds of the room and taking note of the appearances and manners of the different men engaged. He had observed the sleek professional, stolid behind his sparkling diamonds, his apparent self-satisfaction with his faultless attire; the head sawyer of the mills; the common laborer; the "jolly tar;" the man from the loging camp; "John," the almond-eyed celestial; the waiters and cooks on steamers, and the adventurers like himself. As some unfortunate player lost his "pile" and withdrew, some other knight of the green cloth took his place. Ferguson watched his chance and promptly filled the breach, first asking permission of course, politeness being one of the virtues gamblers all hold to and treasure up, thereby flattering themselves that this, in a sort of a way, makes amends for the loss of more weighty characteristics, which go to make up the full complement of a man that they feel somehow to have sacrificed in their choice of calling.

Ferguson was a conspicuous figure in that motley crowd. His finely moulded head, his handsome face, every feature clear and distinct in its outline, as superbly chiseled by culture, education, and social refinement, as a cameo. It was such a sight as might have made an angel weep. Even a casual observer in passing by might have been heard to mutter to himself, *soto-voce*, "Another man gone wrong."

He drew a handful of gold and silver coins from his pocket, placed them on the table before him, pushed his hands through his wealth of black curls, drawing them down over

the forehead and brows, gave his carefully trained mustaches a gentle stroking, set his collar straight under his chin, turned his diamond ring to exactly the right point to catch the fullest rays of the light, compressed his lips, banished all expression from his face, until his whole head and frame seemed as emotionless as marble statuary. It was the preparation of the gladiator summoning up his courage, stiffening his sinews, extending his nostrils wide, inhaling to his fullest expansion, combined with the trained and cultured marshalling of his mental forces by the intellectual athlete. Strange that great learning, brilliant parts, and rich, natural endowments should thus be perverted. Ruination, yet magnificent in its ruins.

The play began with indifferent success; first one and then another of the three men losing while the fourth was stacking the coins in a neat pile before him. Decks of cards were thrown on the floor one after the other in rapid succession for fear that they had been tampered with by some one of the players. By midnight one of the men had lost his last "bit" and silently withdrew. Ferguson had lost and won and lost again; his pile was getting small and smaller. It seemed that his last dollar would soon be gone, then, as if by magic, another dollar would take its place. His antagonists' suspicions were aroused. They played on and on, Ferguson still losing; all was well until one of the others began losing; then he said, "pardon me, Mister, but one of the rules of this game is, that no man goes down in his

pocket for money; you play your pile in sight as gentlemen do or there will be trouble here."

Ferguson raised his eyes, but said nothing; at the next deal he lost; his luck changed and he was loser until his last "bit" was played; as he tossed it on the table another dollar was under his hand; again the player who had first called his attention to the rules of the game, said, "I thought I told you that it was against the rules of this game to go down in your clothes for more stuff?"

Ferguson, with the air of the cool, collected man that he was, said, "It is my last dollar, you better have it; you are welcome to it." The man who had last dealt looked at him with a puzzled gaze; "you're a good one," and shoved the cards over to Ferguson to deal.

This time Ferguson took in the money; as he did so both men looked at him and then at each other; the man who had first objected, said, "see here, stranger, that won't do."

"What won't do?" said Ferguson, "I noticed that as long as you were winner you continued to take my money; it is only when you are loser that you object." It was brains and strategy against rules.

"You're running in a cold deck on us, and I won't have it."

Ferguson's eyes flashed fire. "Be quiet, my friend, you was the first to object in this game; if you don't like it, suppose you quit. If you had objected when I was loser I would have gone out; but it don't come with good grace

from a *gentleman* to violate the rules of his own game when he is winner, and then object when his opponent has the better of him."

Both men now placed their revolvers on the table beside them. It was Ferguson's deal. In a few minutes they were both dissatisfied; they saw they were being fleeced by a stranger; there were no words this time. When Ferguson reached out his hand for the stakes, the man opposite him caught up his gun in the twinkling of an eye and fired. Ferguson fell from his chair and rolled on the floor with a ball through his left breast.

CHAPTER XXIII

"To-morrow ever does its work irresistibly and does it to-day, and it ever strangely attains its object."

IT was "Old Lynxy's" turn now. He had shadowed this man for more than a year. He had dogged his footsteps through every city in the East; traced him from New York to San Francisco and back to New York and west again, up the coast and at last made his acquaintance on board the cars running from Bismarck to Seattle.

Ferguson was an *alias*. His real name was John Q. Legendre; descended from an ancient and highly respectable family of French Huguenots. Legendre and Fred Bullion had been boys together. Legendre had acquired the habit of gambling while in college, and had at different times found a friend in Fred when in straits for ready money. The habit grew upon him with his age until he had lost his entire fortune. He had no profession, no trade, and when he found himself without money and without friends, he turned naturally to the friend of his youth. He allowed himself to become the recipient of Fred Bullion's gold, until he felt himself under deep and lasting obligations to the man who had thus discommoded himself to assist him.

In the month of October, before the death of Dr. Arlington, he was hard pressed, sorely in need of more money, something had to be done. He appealed to Fred in such a

way that nothing but a full disclosure of Fred's financial embarrassments would satisfy him or be accepted as a refusal. Fred was in hard lines himself. He needed money in his business. If he could only consummate his plans he could then draw on his uncle for the needful; but how Legendre succeeded in obtaining money from Fred can best be told in his own dying words.

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"Old Lynxy," as the detective had been nick-named by his associates in crime, had a sort of presentiment. He afterward said that something was going to happen that night, and he had determined to see the outcome of the play. Ferguson did not speak after the shot was fired. "Old Lynxy" was the first to reach him and raise up his head. He seemed to half regain consciousness and was helped to a sitting posture, and in a few minutes was assisted to a chair.

The men at the table had taken their money and disappeared. Ferguson looked at "Old Lynxy," and then at his stake, and indicated that he take charge of it, which he accordingly did, Ferguson nodding assent.

Preparations were speedily made to get the wounded man to his room. He was evidently bleeding internally. There was no physician at the port at that time, and nothing could be done for the sufferer. The ball that had been fired was a large one; from the improved self-cocking Colt revolver, and had passed entirely through the body and was found in his underwear. "Old Lynxy" knew that his time was

short, and he was determined to make the best of the situation.

When the wounded man had been made as comfortable as it was possible for him to be under the circumstances, "Old Lynxy" said, "I am afraid my dear old boy that you are done for." Ferguson looked up and seemed to say with his eyes, "you are right." "Old Lynxy" then began to spread his net.

"Anything you would like to say, any word or message to a friend, or anything you would like to — to unbosom yourself of?"

Ferguson looked at the man now sitting by his side; he knew his purpose; he knew that he had shadowed him for thousands of miles. "Yes," said Ferguson, "there is one thing I want to say to you, you are not half so smart as you think you are; you have been on my track for a year; you have employed all your art to trap me; you are working for a reward; you are one of the human fiends that manage to live by tracking men your betters; your purpose has been to apprehend me and have me convicted and hanged for the murder of Dr. Arlington." He was breathing hard, and it was with great difficulty that he was able to talk. He paused a moment, and then resumed. "You see how fruitless have been all your efforts; so they always would have been. I feel now that I have but a few hours at the outside to live. I am duty bound to make full reparation for all I have done so far as it is in my power so to do." Even in his struggle with death there was a fierce look on his face as he

turned his eyes on "Old Lynxy." "Call in a gentleman"— with as strong an emphasis on the last word as he was able to give it — "and I will tell him what I know of this murder of Dr. Arlington." A third party was soon in attendance, and "Old Lynxy" was ready to reduce the statement to writing.

The dying man asked to be raised a little higher, as he felt a smothering sensation coming over him. When they had elevated his head and shoulders he seemed to breathe easier. Addressing himself to the stranger who had come in at his request, he said:

"I know that I am dying; that there is no possible hope for my recovery, and I wish to save an innocent man from the gallows. That man is John Ashton, a lawyer, now believed to be in Switzerland, who was tried and convicted for killing Dr. Arlington in his — Ashton's — private office, a year ago last November, in the city of B., State of ——. He is not guilty of the crime. Neither am I. Further than that, I might be presumed to be an accessory before the fact; but in reality I am not an accessory. The real murderer was drowned off the Atlantic coast, near Marble Head, last June, about a year ago now.

My connection with the matter was this: I was in need of money. Fred Bullion could get it for me if he could hurry along his wedding day. This I knew, and had the promise of money when that event would transpire. John Ashton was the law partner of Judge Bullion and his daughter, Julia, whom Fred Bullion expected to marry. But those

persons having the best opportunity for knowing the real facts in the case seemed to think that the daughter preferred her partner to Fred. In fact, Fred as much as intimated this to me himself. In my last interview with Fred, before the murder was committed, he said, 'You see I am not married, and to complicate matters Dr. Arlington has appeared on the scene. Julia is paying him some attention, not because she cares anything for him, but she wants to play us off against each other, and when she has sent us both to drink or the devil, she will marry Ashton. That's how I see it now. If they were out of the way I might stand a show to win, not otherwise.'

"This was all he said. I did not want to involve him in any way by an overt act or suggestion. I knew nothing of Ashton other than that he was a lawyer and the adviser of Dr. Arlington; but I was satisfied that I knew a party that could solve the difficulty without in any way involving Fred or myself. I had no thought that Ashton would be so seriously involved that he would not be able to extricate himself, neither did I intend that the party who did the act should commit murder to compass his ends.

"I disguised myself as Ashton after going to the court house and studying his make-up. My principal kept me posted as to Ashton's whereabouts on the two different occasions that I visited Ward's place for the purpose of obtaining the dagger. I left the detail of arranging the other matters with the real murderer, who knew both Ashton and Arling-

ton, and was better acquainted with the office hours of the two men.

"I wrote the note purporting to come from Ashton, after I had studied some legal documents written by him. The man who did the deed duplicated the keys to Ashton's office and secreted himself in the office while Ashton was at lunch. He took Ashton's key out of the lower lock and placed it on the floor; arranged the night lock so that he could open the door quickly when the work was done.

"The coal bin was just opposite the door where he made his exit. When he struck the fatal blow and got out of the room he darted into the coal bin and locked it from the inside with a key he had previously prepared. There was a scuttle hole at the rear end of the coal bin leading out on the inner court of the building; through this he escaped to a ladder, climbed out the sky-light, and when darkness came on he passed down on the rear fire escape. After Ashton's escape he became frightened and his drowning was suicidal.

"Fred Bullion knows nothing of these facts, nor who did the impersonation of Ashton, or who committed the crime. I have since reminded him of his promise to aid me when he saw his way clear to the marriage, and being afraid that suspicion would point to him in some way if some other matters were known, he has always supplied me with all the money that he could conveniently advance me. This is all I care to say."

"Old Lynxy" was able to get a full and complete statement of the dying man's utterances, for it was with great

difficulty that he was able to talk, being compelled to make frequent pauses owing to his hard, labored breathing and coughing.

After he had rested a few minutes, the detective asked him if he cared to hear his statement read for the purpose of seeing if it was correct. Ferguson nodded assent, and it was read by "Old Lynxy."

The dying man lay quite motionless while the reading was going on, with an occasional interruption caused by his coughing. When the end was reached, he gasped for breath, and in a paroxysm of coughing he said, "My God, has it come to this!" When he had recovered slightly the detective asked him if it was correct, and if he was willing to subscribe his name to the statement. He expressed his willingness. It was placed before him and a pen put in his hand. "Sign your real name," said the detective. Ferguson threw a significant glance at him and wrote John Q. Legendre.

"Water, water!" it was placed to his lips; he turned on his side as if to allow the blood to flow from his mouth, threw up his right arm and fell back on the pillow, dead!

CHAPTER XXIV

"Over all events, all means and ends in this world, there rules God's inscrutable sovereignty."

THE following morning the detective wired Julia announcing the death of Legendre, and that he had made a confession which was in writing and properly vouched for, and that it would be perfectly safe to apprise Ashton of the facts, and inform him that he could now come home in perfect safety.

Together with Mary's assistance, Julia had been able to make Ashton's hiding place perfectly secure from the searchings of the detectives. This woman had stood by Julia Bullion in her troubles with a devotion that was heroism personified, yea glorified.

She had disposed of all her worldly effects and taken up her residence in Paris; worked as an apprentice in a fashionable dress-making establishment, and had made five different trips from Paris disguised as a peasant girl, to where Ashton was secreted in the Alps, with messages from Julia to Ashton. Twice had warned Ashton of the approach of detectives, and sent them in the wrong direction.

Julia was now at liberty to take her father into her confidence, and was glad to have the wisdom and judgment of so wise a man as Judge Bullion to rely upon. It was thought advisable to wait until the detective brought the important

document and have it properly filed as a paper in the case. This was in due time done, and the court announced judicially that as soon as the defendant came into court that the proper entry would be made on the record, and his vindication and innocence formally announced from the bench.

Ashton was informed as speedily as the wings of lightning could carry the news, and he lost no time in making the return trip.

He was received with open arms by his partners, and was tendered a reception by the members of the bar which he declined to attend. On his first appearance in open court the proper proceedings were had, and the law firm of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion took up its business and again went forth to their professional field of labor. The notoriety of the case and the final honorable acquittal not only restored their old clients but made them many new ones.

Mary Forsythe was not forgotten. The woman who was good enough to stand between Julia Bullion's partner and the jaws of death was good enough to stand in the presence of the kings and queens of this earth, and she did; for Julia, with the aid and assistance of her friends, enabled her to open an extensive dress-making business. Every detail she had thoroughly learned in Paris, and she at once became one of the leading artists in her business. When her father had learned of the part that she had taken in this tragedy, from Julia's lips, he repented his harsh treatment of his daughter and would not rest content until she again returned to his roof.

Time never runs against the hands on the dial of justice's clock. That clock ever continues to strike. It has not always been heard on this earth, but its record is being kept; it has struck ten, it will go on to the high hour of noon, when the Master will call all from suffering and from the cruel hand of wrong, from sin and sorrowing, and spread bounteous repasts and refreshings hard-by the throne for all such as delight in His justice, and mercy, and goodness, and truth.

CHAPTER XXV

"The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall, spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe love."

IT was in the last days of June that Ashton returned home and took up his work where he had left it nearly two years before. He had for nearly two years been subjected to the severest mental strain. He had aged very fast. At first appearance a stranger would have taken him for a man of sixty. He was but the half of that. His jet black hair was now as white as that of his senior partner's. His mustaches an iron gray, and his face bore that sombre look that is born of care, and fear, and dread.

Judge Bullion had again returned to his practice, and spent a few hours each day at his office. Friends and clients came in to congratulate him and his partners on their final deliverance. It seemed to be a tonic to Judge Bullion's mind to sit at his desk and feel that the strong, self-reliant mind of Ashton was at his command, and ready to second him in the discussion and examination of difficult and intricate propositions of law.

But this was not all, besides the man of resources, of knowledge, of eloquence, of oratory, and all the winning graces of an advocate; all this versatility was aided and abetted by the factor to him, to Ashton unknown but for the tragedy in the last two years enacted. If Judge Bullion had

on the day of their admission wished that she had been a boy, how much more did he wish that she was a man. Julia had come out of that fiery ordeal with fewer visible signs of the suffering she had endured than any one of the firm. Not that she had suffered less, but because woman endures pain and grief as man cannot. If the pain and sufferings of women were to be transferred and borne but for one year by the men, there would be more blue ruin, and moaning, and wailing in the land than has been heard from the lips of woman since the world began.

Judge Bullion had not yet settled down to hard work, his mind kept up a sort of side show that detracted his attention from the main question. So long as Ashton was in his presence he could not keep his eyes off from him. He could but think of the causes of his gray hairs, his grief, his sufferings, his agony. These daggers to his heart would not down. He felt that constant gnawing at his mind by that inward monitor that forever reminded him of the part he had played in this bleeding business. He had endeavored to turn the tide of his daughter's affections, he must now feel how futile had been his attempt. Where before there might have been nothing but strong admiration and respect, was now that burning love that could do, and dare, and die if need be. Before him was the proof that put all doubts at rest forever.

When Julia had that morning entered the office he had noticed the brightening effect it had on Ashton's sombre brow. How changed the entire man. How manifest their relations showed in their very faces and every act. When

two people are once thoroughly in unison and love each with the other it is as impossible for them to conceal it as it would be to hide a sunbeam that has once been allowed admittance through an aperture in a darkened room. It is not only envy, and malice, and hate, and vengeance, and murder that will out, but that other quality of the heart that grows, expands, asserts, throbs, and beats, and thrills, and mounts, and leaps up into a living flame and bursts forth in power and light to illumine and fill the earth with joy; that proclaims its coming and presence, and fills the eyes with light and expands the soul to its utmost bounds.

Inspiration in proclaiming "the fruit of the Spirit" gave love preference over joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and placed the seal of Infinite approval upon it in words never to be forgotten; "against such there is no law."

Judge Bullion realized that morning as he had never done in his life before that "descent and distribution" were only "legal fictions," devised and invented for the purpose of hanging clogs on the minds and hearts of men and women yet unborn. He ran over in his mind, "Estates Tail," "Condition," "Conditional Limitations," "For Life," "Curtesy," "Dower," "Fee, Base, Qualified, Determinable," "Tenancy at Sufferance, at Will, Year to Year," "Remainder, Vested, Contingent, Cross," "Executory Devise."

He turned them over in his mind, how poor and bare they all looked to him this morning; how they had filled his mind for years; how they had driven away happiness,

and peace of mind for the last two years. How had it all come about, this desolation, this heart-burning, this darkness, this grief, he startled himself, "Law," "Legal Fictions" did it.

Cui bono? O that the past, now rising up before him, more terrible than an army with banners, might sink into oblivion where so many times before he had hoped it had vanished and was swallowed up in thick night. He thought of Julia, of Ashton, of the past; strange that they could not comprehend him; that they could not see themselves as he saw them; "love though is blind," he said to himself, and fell to musing.

Then Fred Bullion's queer actions returned to plague him with questions. Why should Fred hold his marriage at so cheap a rate as to speak of it in confidence to such a man, a common gambler? Why let him have money? How unfortunate for our happiness sometimes, for our peace of mind, that we allow ourselves to ask hard questions. We find an opening for an entering wedge, and we drive it home; we are then in the same frame of mind the lock-picker is in when he feels the combination yielding up its first bolt; it is the voice from the abyss replying to our cry. It is that novel experience of our mind meeting the mind of another when that other is far away. Yes, he tells Legendre that he will have money when he is married, gives particulars and states why it has not been consummated.

When one man importunes another simply as a pen-

sioner, that other needs but say, "I can not," that is a complete reply to the request; that is a full and complete answer to the one. But when a common gambler, an acquaintance merely, dogs another and asks for money to satisfy a passion, he may say, "Avaunt, quit my sight." "But hold," says the gambler, "I have a secret." Thus reasoned the mind of Judge Bullion who had for a life-time studied the minds, motives, and secret springs, that compel men to do or not to do certain things; to take certain positions, to lead certain lives.

It would do no good to see Fred, that would not throw any light on the subject; he too was a Bullion. That was an honorable and an honored name, how could he. He could not think Fred guilty of any serious crime; he could not believe him innocent with Legendre's dying statement before his mind. It was the tumbling of the locksmith's first bolt; he must needs go on; it would not do to stop here; he is impelled to go forward.

There was no hope that he would ever be able to utilize Fred in his dreams; no hope that Fred would be of any service to him in steering his craft safe among the rocks and shoals that he saw in the dim twilight, that must inevitably confront him. He must find some other way out of this difficulty that was so fast thickening about him. At times he would nerve himself up and decide to lay the cause of all his troubles before his partners, and as often as that resolve had been made it had melted away in hot shame on the first sight of either of them.

CHAPTER XXVI

"Change is the mask that all continuance wears."

IT was that time in the summer that Judge Bullion had for as many years as Ashton and Julia had known him, prepared to worry through his vacation. They dreaded to see him go; he invariably came home more wearied, more completely exhausted, than at the time of going away; but the unuttered influence that took him was never a subject of conversation. This year he made unusual preparations, though he seemed less inclined to go than on any previous year. His partners planned a trip in which he was to be one of the participants, but to their disappointment he announced that he had laid out a journey for himself that would take him once more to the home where hislife began. He would visit the old haunts of his boyhood, he would surely get away from all his troubled dreams.

But the unexpected was always happening, and when he found himself there his whole life came back to him with tenfold more force than it had ever done at any other time or place. All his faults stood out in bold relief; all his innocent years condemned him. He must have relief; it was past endurance; he must send for Fred. The following morning he sent this message to Fred:

"July 10th.

"FRED:

"I am here; it has turned out contrary to what I expected; come at once. R. B."

The Judge had met Fred the day before his departure and apprised him of the likelihood of his sending for him. Fred lost no time, but posted with all haste to join his uncle.

Minds over-burdened with dread or guilt have more trouble to keep their possessors from feeling that at some unguarded moment they have communicated their secret than the secret itself disturbs them. This was precisely Fred's feelings as he hurried to meet Judge Bullion. What have I confessed to him? how much has he learned? who has told him? These and other harassing thoughts kept him in torture.

It was late in the evening, on the night of the 12th, that Fred reached a snug little cottage far up among the Hampshire hills. The Judge had retired, but left word that Fred should be shown to his room if he came that night. It was some relief that he might know the worst before he slept, if he was permitted to sleep at all.

He found the Judge propped up in bed with his French novel in his hand. On Fred's entering the room, he laid aside his glasses and book; requested Fred to adjust his pillows so as to give him nearer a sitting posture before inviting him to a seat.

When once comfortably settled in his position the Judge again adjusted his glasses and turned that penetrating gaze, acquired by years of practice, and other years on

the bench, full and fair on Fred's tired face. While Fred did not comprehend the full thought back of the gaze he felt the force of the method. It disturbed him. Mentally the Judge said: "I have reasoned correctly; now is the time; he is an easier victim now before he has the time to lay plans than he would be in the morning, and if he has any secrets to give up he will divulge them now more readily than on the morrow."

The Judge had been gay the night before his Waterloo; he was sombre now in his night on St. Helena. He began by taking off his glasses; there was a nervous twitching of the muscles about his closely shaven lips; his eyes were nearly closed; he readjusted his glasses; took up his book; "this is a terrible business Fred that we are in, you and I; probably I should lay aside common courtesy and say I and you." He stopped to see how this had affected Fred.

"You and I?" said Fred.

"Yes, I and you."

"I don't understand?"

"Neither do I."

"Then we are both in the dark."

"Not exactly."

"Why not?"

"Because I know that you know."

"Know what?"

"I know that you know more than Legendre confessed on the night of his death."

"About what?"

"About your complicity in Dr. Arlington's death."

"My complicity!"

"*Your* complicity."

"You surprise me."

"I am never surprised."

"But he did not connect me."

"He did connect you sufficiently to show that he did not wish to leave any suspicions by being silent as to you."

"I am innocent—"

"You are not being arraigned now. You are not being called upon to plead." The last words fell from Judge Bullion's lips with that cold, steely ring that was his want when addressing the culprit in the box.

"Don't convict yourself so soon."

"Convict myself?"

"Yes, yourself."

"How?"

"By crying out before you are accused."

"You say that I am accused."

"You forget yourself."

"Yourself?"

"No, *yourself*."

"Beg pardon, then myself."

"Yes, sir, I say yourself."

"How do I forget myself?"

"I have not accused you."

"Did you not say that I was accused?"

"Well, did I?"

"I thought you did."

"No, you feared I would."

"Why?"

"Why? why interrogate me upon a subject when you are better posted than I can possibly be?"

Fred thought he saw an opening, and determined to finish his more skilled antagonist in a war of words, if possible, by one fell-blow.

"If you do not wish to be interrogated in relation to a matter which you say concerns us both why should you send for me to come all this distance that you may interrogate me?"

"It is a dangerous thing sometimes, my dear nephew, to ask questions."

"Yes, I see."

"You see what?"

"That it is dangerous to ask questions," said Fred nervously.

Fred was at sea and floundering badly, he felt that he had been impaled on the bare hook dropped by the Judge, and it was only a question of time when he would be landed by this skillful angler after thoughts.

"You see that it is dangerous to ask questions? yes, but you saw the danger after it was too late to profit by it. If you are innocent, as you say you are, why should you have any hesitancy about being interrogated? What was in my possession before my last talk with you has been considerably augmented by some other facts that I have since

gathered and now you have confirmed my position and I see it all."

"You see it all?"

"Yes."

Fred heaved a sigh as much as to say, "it is all over, and so soon." The Judge turned away his head and removed his glasses.

"Well, then," said Fred.

"Well, what then?" replied the Judge.

"What do you wish further?" said Fred, with a slight emphasis on the last word as though he thought the conversation was at an end and dreaded to take it up again. The Judge held up his glasses before his face and looked at him.

"Further?"

"Yes, further?"

"I could wish that you had some mitigating circumstances, something that might take away all the ghastliness of this horrid affair," replied the Judge. His tone was one that indicated how deeply he felt on this subject.

Fred had not anticipated this move, he did not see this trap in his pathway; he had walked head-long into it and now it was sprung upon him.

"I would like to be heard before I am condemned in this wholesale way," said Fred, much affected.

"Very well, I'll hear you, proceed." This last was said in a manner and tone that said, I am conferring a favor upon you, when, at the same moment, the Judge was congratulating himself on the fact that he had gained his point,

and that his nephew was about to confess that which was a profound mystery to him.

"Where shall I begin?"

"Wherever you think proper."

"You have drawn a wrong conclusion from Legendre's statement."

"I am open to conviction."

He told the absolute truth when he said that I was in no way cognizant of the facts, nor had any knowledge of the intentions of the man who did the deed. I can't tell why he should mention my name in that confession at all; I can only tell what I know about the cause that led up to the act.

"The facts and knowledge first, explanations afterward —more matter and less art—proceed."

Legendre met Dr. Arlington shortly after that miserable afternoon with his (Legendre's) sister. If the Judge had spoken truthfully a few minutes before when he said, "I am never surprised," he had said it for the last time, for he was surprised. At the time of their meeting, Legendre asked the Doctor "if he did not think that we" meaning the Doctor and myself, "had, to use Legendre's expression, 'Got ourselves in a hole.'"

The Doctor knew that Legendre was a desperate character, and that his only hope was in fighting the devil with fire, and he accordingly remarked, as coolly as he could under the circumstances, "that the courts were open, and that his counsel was always employed."

"Who is your counsel?" inquired Legendre.

The Doctor replied, "Ashton."

You see he took his cue from that as well as from the information he had from me, and he inferred from developments later on that Arlington had been his sister's physician, and that I was expecting to marry your daughter, and that it would, in all probability, break off the negotiation, if his sister's condition became known.

So you see that it was through Arlington that he first learned of my future prospects. After he learned this, he made inquiries that I could not help but disclose my expectation and prospects.

Legendre attributed his sister's death to Arlington, and when he learned that Ashton would defend him, he naturally felt embittered against both of them.

I did not tell Legendre that they were rivals of mine, but he suspected that they were, and that they would endanger my prospects. To be relieved of his annoyance and constant importunity, I permitted him to have that impression as the easiest way out of the embarrassing situation I was in.

Legendre was a proud man, and even in his death he did not wish to disclose more than was necessary to clear Ashton. At the same time, he saw that he must give some motive to his confession, that it would carry the weight he thought it ought to have.

There was an unearthly gleam in the Judge's eyes as he turned his head and said, almost savagely, "then you have been cognizant of these facts all these years and kept silent?"

"Upon my honor as a man, no; I knew nothing; I only had my suspicions, and no way to verify them."

"Why not make your suspicions known?"

"Legendre would have known at once where the cue came from, and would have sought to implicate me and drag me into the matter, no telling what the results."

"Yes, I see," said the Judge; "you preferred that Ashton should hang for Legendre's crime rather than yourself; that is in accordance with the first law of our natures."

"Well, what would you have done?"

"You are asking questions again; I am not on the witness stand."

"Neither am I," said Fred, somewhat nettled.

"As you please, sir; this is your confession, not mine."

"If you don't care to hear me further, I will leave off." But the Judge did care to hear him further.

"I am listening."

I think I am simply drawing a conclusion from Legendre's statement, such as it reasonably indicates upon its face, when I say that he knew that he must give some motive for the deed, that the statement might have weight as a confession.

The Judge closed his eyes, while Fred went back in his mind to gather up the thread of his story; after waiting a moment for him to collect his thoughts, he opened them, and said, kindly, "I listen."

I was as ignorant of the facts and who the murderer really was as you were until Legendre's confession. I had

suffered enough for my folly without offering myself as an immolation to expiate the guilt of another. At this point Fred looked at his watch; "one o'clock," said he, "would it not be as well to take this up in the morning, uncle?"

Judge Bullion saw that he had gained his point, and could take the matter up in the morning, and rather than seem in a hurry, acquiesced in Fred's suggestion.

"Quite," said the Judge. "You will occupy the room adjoining this." The door was ajar, and all he had to do was to walk in.

"Good night, uncle."

"Good night, Fred."

Left alone, the Judge began turning over these new acquisitions to see what use he could turn them to. After some reflection, he arrived at about this conclusion: that Fred's course was quite natural, and both of them were to be congratulated that he was no nearer the deed. While he did not technically stand in the position of an accessory, yet, as he said, his folly had caused the death of Arlington and came near taking Ashton's life. His folly; well, I don't know how I could consistently characterize it by any harsher name. "Well, then, on the morrow."

CHAPTER XXVII

"The little that we see
From doubt is never free,
The little that we do
Is but half nobly true."

FRED flattered himself that he had guessed the inward feeling of his uncle by his outward manifestations; and thought the Judge did not put a too harsh construction on what had seemed a grave offense; and true to human nature, he felt more like excusing himself now than at any time previous, for the reason that all of us see our faults as less culpable if they are not too severely judged by our fellows.

There are two classes of persons, who have something in their make-up, that relieves us from restraint and embarrassment, when we come to confess our faults and short-comings. The one we feel is above thinking an evil thought; that would scorn doing a mean act; the other we feel is as weak as ourselves, or has done just what we have or would have done under similar circumstances.

It is not our province to say in which class Fred had placed either the Judge or himself; nevertheless his embarrassment had somewhat passed off and he was quite himself in the morning. He greeted his uncle in his old-time hearty manner, and talked of the days when the Judge was a boy among these hills.

The Judge was always a man of dispatch; if he had business on hand, that was the first thing that claimed and had his attention. Breakfast was soon over and he invited Fred into his private room.

The things one says in the quiet of the night when the darkness is illuminated by one single tallow dip, would not be so easily said in the broad day-light at seven in the morning, and the very thoughts of what Fred had said so easily on the past night now appalled him. His first thought was to back out of the room and say to his uncle that he was indisposed; in fact, was taken suddenly ill and beg to be excused. But before he could address the Judge he was directed to a seat, the door closed behind him. As he half dropped into the chair he was confronted by his uncle in the act of drawing a chair close beside him and at the same time looking full into his face.

There are men who could stand perfectly unconcerned at the sight of a pistol pointed at them with the command to stand and deliver, who would shrink from a man drawing a chair toward them with a look that Judge Bullion's face wore at that minute. There is a feeling that comes over one at such a time that is indescribable. It is that wide and deep dread that our ignorance lends to the unforeseen and unknown extent of probabilities.

Fred clutched convulsively the arms of his chair as though he felt that some unforeseen power was about to blow him out of the room. He was in precisely the same position the over-matched man is in, when he sees his burly and pow-

erful antagonist approaching him in the ring and realizes that he is over-matched, he is half conquered before the battle begins.

The Judge was the first to break the silence. "Well?" How that meaningless word jars on one's nerves at such a time. It is the sensation one experiences while standing on tip-toe, mouth wide open, waiting to receive the shock caused by the firing of a cannon which one momentarily expects will be discharged. The longer one waits the more tension on one's nerves and the more one feels the shock.

Fred felt so utterly helpless that he began bracing himself, by pushing with all his strength on the arms of the chair. When he had thus screwed his courage up to the sticking point he managed to force his voice through his teeth, "Well, what?"

The Judge had feared the reaction, and he saw that he must apply the lash and that, too, with severity. "You talk like a man in his dreams—what you omitted to say last night."

Fred had not fully regained his senses, and he struck out with one of those aimless questions that sometimes puts the shrewdest cross-examiner at his wits ends.

"What did I omit to say last night?"

A less careful man than Judge Bullion might have dashed blindly at that staggering question, and said, "How do I know what you omitted to say?" but he did no such thing. He calmly looked at Fred for a moment and then said, "If you have decided to make no further statement, if

you do not wish to make a full breast of this matter then I shall feel at liberty to put my own construction on the facts now in my possession."

The man who is in possession of the facts, or makes one feel that he is, and can pass judgment, but suspends sentence until one has had an opportunity to explain, is on the vantage ground and makes one feel as under obligation to tell all one knows. By stepping out from behind his fortifications he has disarmed you, and when the truce is over you are undone. Precisely Fred's position.

The intensity of feeling depends upon the amount of resistance that can be brought against it. This probably accounts for the difference between the ease with which he talked the evening before and the difficulty he was now experiencing. Then he was tired and worn out with travel, excitement, and dread; now his mind had gained its wonted elasticity and vigor, and it rebelled against being thus unceremoniously invaded.

If on the night previous he only felt the force of the Judge's methods he now saw the reason for his adopting them. To be caught in the net spread by your antagonist is painfully embarrassing; but to afterward see that your stupidity made the thing possible is exasperating.

Fred's anger and pride suggested that he say to his uncle to use his own pleasure in the matter, and he arose with the full determination to leave the room. The silence was painful. If the Judge would only go off in a tower of rage, and threaten and storm he could walk out without the

least difficulty, but there was where he was again checkmated. The Judge never said a word, but gazed straight out the window. Fred started toward the door, but his eyes were on his uncle. "Confound it, why can't he say just one word and help me out of this disagreeable business?" thought Fred. But he did not all the same.

Don't you know that nine out of every ten persons who have ever gone from your presence against your will have done so while you were talking? That if you had been silent, the silence would have held them with more than the strong force of the three-fold cord that is not quickly broken.

Fred's resolve broke down just as he put out his hand to lift the latch; he hesitated, and was gone. He turned round, paced up and down the room several times, thinking that his uncle might break the silence and the spell by speaking first, but the Judge was as imperturable as a sphinx, and just as silent. Fred sat. The Judge looked at him, not even a "well" to help him out. It was now clear to him that if he had any further confession to make it all depended upon himself to get through with it and be gone.

"I am ready."

"I am listening."

"Where shall I begin?"

"You said that once before, it is not my confession, begin where you please."

This time Fred's pride and anger struggled with his

admiration for the man's gall; to use his exact thought: "He sends for me, brings me here without even the slightest intimation as to the use he intends to put me to; forces me into detailing an account of my own shame and instead of helping me make a full and clean breast of the matter to him by extending his sympathy, forces it out of me by the aid of mental thumb screws."

"Well," the boot was on the other foot this time.

"Well, what?" "I believe you remarked that a short time ago," observed his honor.

"I have a slight recollection of that myself," Fred replied.

"Well to begin—" he hesitated again.

"Begin you."

Jack Legendre, as he was known among the boys, attended the same school for boys that Ashton and myself were at. He was in the class that graduated the year after I did. I knew him well; he was bright and passionate, with strong likes and dislikes. Fortunately and unfortunately he liked me. He saved me from some very serious college trouble to get me into still more social trouble.

His patrimony was worth at least $100,000 the day he arrived at his majority. He maintained himself and sister in gorgeous style. He insisted on my visiting them. I found it quite to my liking. It was not long until I was as much attached to the sister as to the brother, and she returned the sentiment with all the fervor of a woman's nature. I saw this and began thinking that there might be

danger ahead and thought of breaking off the acquaintance. I did so.

Jack continued his gambling and increased his drink until he lost his entire fortune. The sister was in destitute circumstances. By chance I met her; she related the condition she was in. I felt that it was mean in me to share their hospitalities while they were in affluent circumstances and then desert them when in need. I did not turn a deaf ear to her importunity. I gave her assistance and gave liberally. I soon found that Jack was using her as a means by which to extort money from me. I then refused to give her any more if she persisted in supplying him with the means of gambling. She promised that she would not, but you know how that would be as long as she lived in the same apartments with him. It was then that the evil hour came. She told me that Jack had notified her that she must either share with him when he was "broke" or get other quarters. This half nettled me. I said, you get other quarters. She took me at my word, moved into other rooms and notified me of the change. You know the consequences that would follow from such relations.

When a woman, young and handsome, takes money from the hands of a man without giving him value received for it, she compromises her womanhood and it is only a question of time when she is subject to his desires, and a thousands time I have cursed myself for being no better than the average man.

Fred had all this time been looking straight in front of

him, but was conscious that his uncle was giving the closest attention. He felt that the Judge had taken his eyes off him. He turned to see if his senses had deceived him. No, he was right; the Judge had turned his head and was now looking out the window.

"Disgusted," said Fred.

"Go on," said the Judge.

Everything was easier now; Fred had decided in his own mind the class to which the Judge belonged—the class referred to is the one mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

Matters ran along in this way for nearly two years, until one day—the Judge put up his hand. "Yes, there is the difficulty," said he.

"That's what I say," remarked Fred.

"We are not French, Fred."

"No, that is true uncle, and sometimes I feel that they have the best of us."

"We'll not discuss that now," said the Judge.

It was apparent that something must be done; what that something was, I did not know. Jack, of course, was cognizant of all the facts the entire time that she had lived with me as my mistress. He, in fact, paved the way that led to it, and now I think it was all a deep laid plan of his to get me into just that situation.

For the entire two years he had not raised the slightest objection to the relation existing between his sister and me, but on the contrary, seemed to be in full accord with

it. But as soon as he discovered the situation, he came to me in a towering passion and called me libertine, betrayer of his sister, and threatened me with death if I did not make full and complete reparation for the wrong.

He insisted that there was but one thing to be done and that was to marry her. His stock argument was, that if she was good enough to be my mistress, she was good enough to be my wife. I admitted, as well as felt, the force of the argument, but what the devil is a fellow like me to do in the face of society in such a predicament as that.

There were those who knew it, and half the city might have been informed of the fact that she was my mistress, and still that would not have prevented me from moving in the best society, but the moment I should undertake to pull her in with me I would find us both shut out. Fred heaved a sigh and continued. There is no use in a man reasoning about this matter, for when he has reached his conclusion he throws it to the dogs and meekly submits to the inevitable, in the language of the esthetic dude, "why strive after the unattainable."

Society may not be any better than you are, but to use that strong vernacular of the wild and woolly West that is more forcible than elegant, it has the bulge on you, and the indications are that it is likely to keep it.

Jack's stock argument about her being good enough still stuck in the bark, I tried to reason myself into believing he was right, but you know how much force education and custom carry with them. Society teaches us that men may

do what they wish with impunity—what women can not do without everlasting ruination. That she must be better than him, while she associates with him, and if she is not, he may cast her off.

When I came to apply the rule, I felt that it was harsh and unnatural; yet, when I came to reverse it, I had some qualms that I could not argue down. To be good enough for me, she must be better than me; and when she let herself down to my level, then I felt that I—well, not that I was too good for her—but that she was not good enough for anybody.

When we are sick, we apply to a physician, and usually find that there is much truth hidden in that sarcasm of the Bible: "Asa sought not unto the Lord, but unto the physicians, and Asa slept with his fathers."

"My mind was sick, and I sought unto the physicians for relief; that physician was Dr. Arlington. I told him the situation. Together we went through the weary maze that I have just completed. I shall never forget his parting words at the close of our first interview: "I would not think," said he, "of marriage, only as a dernier resort."

I pondered and thought. I asked myself what he could mean; if marriage was a last resort, then there must have been something aside from that in his mind; some resort before taking that step; I might say fatal step.

I decided not to put any criminal construction on his remark, but concluded to ask him what other resort he would refer me to before marriage. This I did at our next meet-

ing. He looked at me in a half-jesting, half-quizzical manner, and answered, "you are a man of the world, and in these years must have thought of the consequences likely to follow such relations as you were having with a person of the opposite sex; and that this natural result was a fair probability that might any day arise in your path and demand a solution or disposition."

I saw at once that he was not disposed to commit himself, and if any course was to be pursued I must suggest it. I therefore named several plans and asked his advice. As to the foundling hospital, he made this remark: "Of all the curses in this ruined and sin-cursed world, I think the foundling hospital the greatest curse, not only to the parents, but to the offspring. If I had what society calls an illegitimate offspring to provide for, I would rather with my own hands take it out and sink it in the depths of mid-ocean than carry it to a foundling hospital, or place it anywhere to come up as a weed to return again some time to plague and to torment me and to reek vengeance upon society for what society had inflicted upon it."

This was a thing I had never thought of, still continuing, he said, "Has it ever occurred to you that society claims the right to do that which it has forbidden you as an individual to take into your own hands?" He looked at me significantly for a moment. I said, "I don't quite understand." "Society," said he, "claims the right as a reserved one, inherent of necessity to its existence, to kill any individ-

ual member of its body when that individual becomes an intolerable evil to itself and society generally."

"It puts a ban of shame and infamy upon every woman caught anticipating a marriage contract. It does not exactly kill her, but in most instances it might as well; ever holding its air-drawn dagger before her eyes and vowing murder; it drives her into the same channel of thought and compels her to think of forestalling it."

"Well, what is the result? It drives some women into this frame of mind. Which shall I choose. Allow myself to be the mother of a child that will, from the day of its birth to the day of its death, wear a badge of shame —which said badge — that makes it a fair mark for the finger of scorn and a target for society to one day compel into that great and everlasting indolence of death, and forever makes me to stand without the gate and cry, unclean, unclean, or shall I take the matter into my own hands and choose which of the two-fold objects of prayer I shall adopt, forestall before the deed is done, or plead for pardon being down? She some times says before I will allow society to lays its hands, thick with human blood, upon me and my prospective child, I will forestall that evil, and if caught, then I will plead for mercy being down."

His thought was suggestive and seemed to me to say, do not adopt the dernier resort. I took the cue. I said I would lay it before her. "That is proper," said he. "It is an awful thing to contemplate; no physician should ever put himself in the position of umpire in such cases, at least I have decided not to do so."

"I had qualms of conscience, however, in trying to shift the burden on her, I was *particeps criminis*, an accessory before the fact, so to speak, would it be manly for me to forsake her? Then again I was wholly at sea. She sent for me. When I entered her room I saw that she had been crying; then my heart went out to her and I inwardly resolved if she said one word about marriage, I would go straightway and have the matter consummated at once, and I only regret now that she did not mention it, that I did not follow the impulse of my best self and act as I felt. When I think of these five lives sunk into night and all the suffering that has been superinduced thereby, I dont know how I can contain myself."

Fred stopped, covered his face with his hands, the outward light was revealing the blackness of the inward darkness in a way that was past enduranee.

But I must go on, for if I leave off here I will never take it up again. There was a tremor in his voice that told how painful his recollections were. He looked at his uncle. The Judge was gazing out into the clouds that hung over the hills. He was lost in thought; two big, crystal tears were just stealing down over his cheeks and hid themsevles in his copious handkerchief that lay upon his bosom. Little did Fred Bullion dream of the painful thoughts that were then revolving themselves in the mind of the "noble Judge." He was now cognizant of the before unconscious bond of sympathy that made them kin and that had unloosed his tongue.

"She said not a word about marriage, but seemed to have been thinking along the same line that the Doctor had suggested. 'I am going', said she, 'to No. —— street, and remain there until I am either out of this embarrassment or dead. Keep this away from Jack, for if he finds where I am he will murder any one he suspects of having a hand in the business.'

"Jack had been on the lookout, he had seen me go to Arlington's office, he had misjudged the Doctor. As soon as he learned that his sister had left her apartments he began to make search for her. He found, by some means unknown to me, where she was. He went there, demanded admittance and the right to search the place. He found no trace of her. He then went to an under-graduate of the college in which Dr. Arlington was a professor, and through this student gained admittance to the dissecting rooms.

He knew that he could recognize her body if he could find it, by a birth mark on the underside of her left arm midway between the elbow and shoulder. Unfortunately for Arlington he found it. From that day Arlington's death was sealed."

"How do you know that?" said the Judge.

"He told me that he had found the body, and she had previously said that Jack had vowed vengeance on any one he found implicated. I told him I had never counseled such a course, and he took my word."

"But why should he implicate Ashton?"

"Because he felt that Ashton was counsel for Arlington."

The Judge had swallowed the contents of this bitter cup, had tasted the very dregs, the gall and worm-wood. He arose, looked out on the old familiar fields and hills. He must needs get rid of this tension. "Let us go out for a constitutional, Fred."

CHAPTER XXVIII

"If he had courage to think out clearly what he vaguely discerns he would discover that self-sacrifices passing a certain limit, entails evil on all, evil on those for whom sacrifice is made as well as on those who make it."

IT is easier to talk sometimes when you feel that your listener is half-occupied with other thoughts, times when you want to talk as much for your own relief as for your companion's edification.

The Judge began talking as they walked down the narrow lane that led to the main high-way. "I see it all very clearly now, Fred. You were absorbed in this affair about the time that you and I talked of your future prospects."

"Exactly, uncle, I was so overwhelmed that it was impossible for me to think of anything, and it was only by the force of positive resolution that I could look a decent woman in the face."

"I don't know what to suggest now as to what would be the proper course for you to pursue; Julia positively refuses to see you or meet you in any way whatever."

"She has always been very cool in her greetings since John's return; and I would not be surprised if they are so completely wrapped up now in each other that it would be impossible for anything to come between them but death."

"I fear you are right, Fred."

"It looks that way to me, uncle."

They walked on in silence for some time, when the Judge was the first to speak. With all of his cold outward demeanor Judge Bullion was a kindly-feeling man at heart.

"This has troubled me a great deal, Fred, and I fear that I have been the cause of wrecking your life along with the rest."

"It was no fault of yours, uncle."

"It is only when we have all the facts before us, Fred, that we are able to arrive at a just conclusion." Fred looked puzzled. "There be some people we think more kindly of living than we do when they are dead," said the Judge, "and I fear this will be my case."

"You are too exacting when you apply your judgment to yourself."

"I ask your pardon, Fred, for the seeming austerity with which I have treated you in this, our conversation."

"O uncle, I—"

"Nay, my dear nephew, it is I who must confess, not you. I was not cruel that I might be natural. It is not always that a man can be gayest when his heart is heaviest. Woman laughs in your face when her heart is ready to break, not so with man."

"It was what I feared you might have done that oppressed me. It was what I did not know that frightened me and made me feel that you would not tell me. I am content, I am satisfied that I know the worst. I can now be easy so far as you are concerned in this bleeding business. I

am comforted to know that you see the situation so clearly as to my partners. No, nothing but fate can separate them."

"There is a side to this cold, heartless life of mine that I would be glad to tell you of." Fred stopped. His mind was so completely at a standstill that his body was left to itself, and like any other machine, stops still when the motive power has suspended. Judge Bullion also halted, the two men stood facing each other. The one a mute and amazed listener; the other a heart-broken, desolate man. Fred saw how much his uncle was moved, and realized how glad he would have been not two hours ago for some one to have just said one word, that he took it upon himself to speak.

"You know, my dear uncle, that you once told me never to inquire into another man's business, more especially his private life; that a real man never made a confident of any one on invitation; but was more likely to speak his mind to some one who was not so curious; that if a man was disposed to confide in another, he would do so only when his own feelings prompted him to the action."

"Yes, Fred, that is true, no matter from what source you got your information. I was not aware that I had ever made such an observation to you." The Judge paused for a moment and then continued :

"And now while on that topic, permit me to say there is another thing equally as true and probably of more importance to every man, and that is this: Remember that your best friend to-day may be your bitterest enemy to-mor-

row; and confide, then, no more than you are willing that your fiercest foe should know."

"Nothing so degenerates an age, a nation, a people, a State, a city, a man, as the holding at too cheap a rate by the possessor. Too much commingling is as vicious, as degenerating, as enervating, as disastrous to body and mind as too little. Like evil communications, too often corrupt good morals. There be those who think the solitary man is the wild beast of society, that the solitary carniverous animal is the typical predatory beast of prey; but then there is another side to this man, the king of solitude is often the king of society,"

> "If the chosen soul could ne'er be alone
> In deep mid-silence open-door'd to God,
> No greatness ever had been dream'd or done;
> Among dull hearts a prophet never grew,
> The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude."

Judge Bullion instantly made application of his advice to his nephew, and the words he was about to utter died on his lips. Fred also recalled what he had just said, and asked no questions.

As by mutual consent, both turned half way round and proceeded to walk down toward the road. "After what we have just observed," remarked Fred, "it would be folly for me to ask you anything concerning yourself, uncle, but I feel that you would fain tell me something out of your rich experience that would profit me."

"My dear fellow, how do you divine my thoughts?

Yes, I would gladly speak to you now about some things, since your experience is to me so well known."

"Thank you, I shall be glad to hear you."

"I would commend you to the careful reading of the sayings of one of the wisest men of the earth. It has not been said of him historically, that I know, what Pope said of Bacon, 'and meanest,' but I think his life if well known would justify the judgment."

"To whom do you refer?"

"Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel. There are men to-day, both married and single, rushing into vice and debauchery with the opposite sex who will find sooner or later that the sins of their lives will recoil upon them with all the fierceness of eternal judgment. They will not stop and consider that 'the wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools' until it is too late.

"Men seek the society of women from motives as different as the differences in different men.

"They do not appreciate the blessings and rewards of a virtuous and pure life as keenly as they feel the evils that result from sin and wrong, for the reason that they rather expect that they ought of right to enjoy the good fortune and fruits of the one and escape the evils of the other.

Man's stock of self consciousness is so abundant that he watches the censorship of society to the neglect of the inward monitor. A coward may obey the laws of society to the letter and follow its mandates with fear and trembling, but it takes a brave man, a resolute man, to resist tempta-

tions from within and flatterers without, for fear of doing violence to his own sense of cleanliness and purity of life.

"The young man who has determined and does so shape his course in life, so that his old age shall be full of peace and purity as it is full of years, is the only man who can reasonably feel safe. We all have more solicitude about escaping the evil than in obtaining the good; we rush head-long into vice and have no fear of the consequences. The thing we are endeavoring to steer clear of is the being caught."

"When we come to consider the question of future prospects and happiness in this life we find that we propose, but that circumstances, money, society, and our past lives, dispose of us to an extent heretofore unseen by us."

"You and I, my boy, had set about doing a certain thing, we proposed, but we had very effectually barred ourselves from disposing, before we reached the case in hand."

"But I can't see why you should say, 'you and I,' " said Fred.

"Yes, and for the moment you can't but forget to remember that it was only a few minutes ago that you said you would not ask a man any questions about his private life, that in all probability he will tell you all he desires to have you know."

"I beg your pardon."

"It is granted."

"I was about to say that you had reached that point in your life where you would be called upon to act very

differently from what you had intended. If we could always find our antagonist in the place we had put him, or had expected to find him, then we would simply be called upon to knock down a man of straw and proceed on our way, but unfortunately our antagonists are not men of straw—they are alive and active as ourselves and as often find us in our weak places as that we surprise them, and as a result life is made up of a series of the unexpected and defeats, interspersed with a few victories."

"There are more blue Mondays than bright Tuesdays, with now and then a gorgeous Thursday, to relieve the sombre hue of the ever-recurring black Fridays. There are more charnel houses that conceal and burry bitter memories, ghastly corpses, than there are conservatories with sweet flowers and blooming hopes, and beauty, and joys. The bright immortelloes are hidden beneath the deciduous cones and dead leaves of the solemn pines, the sad hemlocks, the weeping willows, because man goeth oftener to his long home than to the feast, because the mourners go about the streets oftener than the band plays "Hail to the Chief." The silver cord is loosened more times than the orange blossoms bloom on fair brows. The golden bowl is broken, the pitcher falls at the fountain, the wheel at the cistern ceases to turn just as the lights were about to be seen swinging and the peals of laughter and music to "fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim." But too much of this.

"We are too liable to think that all there is in life is in

being able to attain our ends, our ambitions; to fulfill our desires and gratify our longings for place, and riches, and power. We forget that the noblest acquisitions of life are to attain that fullest measure of manhood that nature has made possible for us without the least interference with the rights of others. It is better to stand on the mole-hill constructed out of our dead selves, upon which we have risen, than to mount to the skies on the accumulations of wrecked lives and broken hearts of others.

"The inequalities of the marital relations make men usurpers and tyrants, and have multiplied ten-fold the burdens of life to the sex that ought of right to be free from care.

"I do not say to you, henceforth stand without the gates, that paradise will be paradise the more because you have once known it and now are barred out, but I do say that there are worse conditions in life than that of being a bachelor. The danger arising from such a mode of living always being the liability to indulge in excesses and immoralities, because no guardian angel stands behind you to say 'Hold, enough.'

"When single men realize that every thought that rouses passionate desire has a tendency to injure intellectual activity, that every impure thought is a clog that retards their progress, and stultifies their better natures, then they will guard the avenues of their minds with that jealous care that will make giants of their intellects as well as their bodies.

"The impression has gone abroad throughout the world that the observations of Solomon apply only to the wiles of

the harlot; that she alone 'hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her.' It is only too true 'that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell; that her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.' But you must remember that she is not the only woman that 'sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their way.' As many men seek this 'foolish woman' — by reason of the fact that the sensible woman at home is not congenial—as are taken by her snares and wiles, and the bonds of the marital relation sit so loosely on so many people that the 'foolish woman' is out-numbered two to one by those who bear the once honorable name of wife."

"Why is it?"

"I have been lawyer and judge these forty years. In that time great changes have been wrought in our modes of living, and thoughts and activities. Then there were but few broad highways leading down through life, and of necessity there was such parallelism in the lives of men and women that there was no good reason for their not journeying together. In fact, there were but few things to distract their thoughts or separate them from the singleness of purpose in which their lives had been moulded.

"Now everything is changed. Instead of a few broad highways, and broad and traveled-beaten paths, men and women are living in entirely different latitudes. They are being born at a distance of 90° from each other, and as they push across the circle of their little worlds, the cir-

cle that circumscribes their lives, they meet at the center; they are so happy at the meeting point that they think for the moment that they were created one for the other, only to find out in a very short time that they were born to live at right angles to each other after they have passed the point of contact.

"We try to smuggle this new condition under an ancient name, and hope that to-morrow will correct this inequality, and make believe that the future will be good because past was not, as though good was the result of chance, and not the very life-blood of our beings.

"These cross-purposes of life in this age have wrought a change that is as sure as civilization itself, and the wise men and women will take advantage of these changed conditions when a few courageous souls dare brave the storms and abuse and scorn that self-constituted goodness and affected cleanliness and prudery will hurl at them."

Judge Bullion stopped. There was that startled look upon his face such as a man might wear who had been caught alone in a secluded spot delivering a lofty oration to himself for want of a sufficiently appreciative audience. He seemed to have been reading to himself from the diary of his life.

He looked at Fred, significantly, and said: "What have I been saying all this time?" He answered the question before Fred had an opportunity to reply. "Just that sort of thing that thousands of married men have been confessing and will continue to confess to themselves, which they would not dare to make public. Society makes cowards of us all,

and compels us to hide our better selves as though we had stolen them."

The spring that had caused the hands to move on the dial of the Judge's thought had spent its force, had lost its tension, and he stopped, like the "old man's clock, never to go again." They returned to the cottage. Fred dined with his uncle, their conversation was but commonplace, both men felt that they had been relieved and were ready to separate. Fred had scarcely time to make the train at the little way station, and was soon off with a hasty good-bye, and Judge Bullion was left alone with his thoughts. He felt that the crisis was upon him, and he must go forth to meet his fate. He, too, made a hasty preparation, and on the following day took his departure and bid the hills a last and long farewell, more sad, if that was possible, than when he sought solace there but three days before.

PART III

CHAPTER XXIX

"The fleeting relish at sensation's brim
Had in it the best ferment of the wine."

WHILE the senior member of the law firm of Bullion, Ashton & Bullion was away among Hampshire hills seeking again the lost opportunity of song, the other members of the firm had given themselves up to a quiet summer vacation.

They did not select the crowded hotel at the fashionable watering place with its gaping curiosity and sublime folly. They chose a more retired and healthful resort on the chain of great lakes. Lakes if but beyond the confines of this republic, if in Europe, thousands of Americans would visit annually. They were not in pursuit of happiness, they had that, they were seeking for an opportunity to enjoy it.

They found a cool secluded spot on the upper lake regions and arranged to spend the heated term in rest, quiet and fishing, and the scooping up of whole bucketsful of renewed vigor and health out of the blue-green waters and health-giving and bracing lake breezes.

It has been said that liberty is brightest in dungeons, or

to those who have been deprived of its blessings. Never before did the earth, air, water, birds, trees and flowers seem so gracious, so good to Ashton. The Supreme Architect of this universe had surely succored him. His prayers for deliverance had been uttered loud enough to be heard in heaven, and the solitary walls of his prison were now exchanged for this wide, glad place. Not only for his deliverance alone was he now breathing a prayer as he looked out upon heaven's blue and the sparkling waters of the lake, but for his deliverer, or the means through which his deliverance was effected.

On the morning after their arrival in the evening, he had risen early, that he might take his constitutional before the guests were up. He walked out with a brisk and hurried step, almost impatient to be alone on the lake beach. When he had turned the point of land that hid the little hotel behind the cluster of pines, he stopped and stood entranced by all the glory around him. So absorbed was he that he forgot his boat and began strolling along the beach.

From the day that Julia had made it possible for him to escape, and proved to him that her plan for his deliverance was feasible, he had never known the moment when she was out of his thoughts, and now that he was here alone he was feeling the loss of her charms and joyousness.

There was a sadness in Ashton's joy even, that made him sombre. His surcharged feelings found vent ofttimes in the bright flashes that gilded all the west, and flooded all the orient with gold. On such occasions, Isaiah's prophesies

suited his thoughts best. He gazed off toward the light-house on the opposite shore. The first gleam of July sunshine was playing on its polished, glassy surface. He stretched forth his hand and repeated words so familiar to him: "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem."

Just then a robin flitted before him and lit almost at the water's edge; made two or three short, quick hops, spread its wings as if to embrace the ripples on the beach, splashed the water over itself, repeated the act one, two, three times, shook the sparkling crystals out of its feathers, and flew away, full of nature's gladness.

Shelley's Skylark, "Singing still dost soar, and soaring, ever singest," was vocal in his mind.

"Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know;
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then
As I am listening now."

"For all the beauty contained in these lines," said Ashton, "there is something about the weird wickedness of Shelley's mind that even his best thoughts produce a feeling of vague unrest in one's heart." In Ashton's moment of vague unrest the vision of the son of Amos, his head shrouded in his mantel, sitting in the door of his tent, was always visi-

ble to him and his mind's eye. And again the words of the prophet were on his lips. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings"—another voice, rich, and clear, as the tones of a silver bell here chimed in with, "why don't you say are the feet of her that bringeth good tidings?"

"Because," replied Ashton, "I did not know that she was bringing them until she spoke."

"Thank you. Good morning."

"I am surprised to see you so early in the morning."

She held out her two hands as she approached him.

"Surprised, is that all?"

"A woman's heart is wholly woman's, a thing apart from all the rest of the world," said Ashton. "I wish sometimes that I could be lifted up the white heights of her womanhood until I could for one moment feel the wondrous depths of her love."

"Then you are more than surprised?"

"I need not say to you that I was more than surprised, you know that."

"Yes, that is true, but that is not what you were thinking."

"What was I thinking?"

"How do I love thee?"

"I know the next, 'Let me count the ways.'"

"I was about to say that I was not only surprised but—" she lifted her finger, "there, we'll not have any afterthought so early in the morning, too prosy."

"Yes, but I am delighted to see you."

"That would come with better grace from a man who had not stolen away in the gray dawn of early morning for the purpose of being alone with himself." She stopped and picked up a smooth pebble and threw it into the water, turning round she said, with a smile lightening her beautiful face and a twinkle in her eyes, "say, John, why do you talk so much to yourself? is it because you never find such an appreciative audience when you address others?"

"Do you object?"

"No, but that don't answer my question, come now, be responsive as you always say to an unwilling witness."

"I presume it is for the same reason the negro boy gave when he was asked why he held his paper so close to his eyes while reading."

"What was that?"

"He said, 'because he got more good out of it that way.'"

"You don't seem to be using your stick, let me take it please, thanks." They walked on in silence.

"That's philosophical."

"What is philosophical?"

"Why, that he got more good out of it that way."

"I've thought so myself sometimes."

"How strange you men are, no sameness of grain about you, none whatever."

"Now, what's the occasion of this reflection on us dear men?"

"Yes, you poor, dear things, only 'sometimes,' yes, I see."

"What do you refer to now?"

"You had another thought that we would get more good out of if you would only say it aloud this morning."

"What's that?"

"Then you have had more than one?"

"Probably."

"Well, I'll only name one."

"Which one?"

"That we take a row on the lake this morning."

"That is what I came down here for, when the beauty of the surroundings so affected me that I took to musing, talking to myself as you put it and forgot all about it, and if I had not been talking to myself I should have been far out on the lake and you here alone."

"Thanks to your musing then."

"Do you know what I was thinking?" said Ashton.

"Hardly."

"I was thinking that I should like to go over to that pile of rocks that stands out above the water in the lake yonder. We can make the trip and return in an hour and a half, will we go?"

"If you like."

Ashton was an expert with an oar and he threw his entire self into the exercise this morning. The sun was fairly above the water of the lake as they neared the huge pile of rocks sitting serenely in the blue-green of the lake. He

pulled around the eastern point from the south, both south and east presented only perpendicular rocks rising out of the water, the north was rugged and jutting, great caverns had been hollowed out of the rock by the action of wind and storm, water and ice, until there was ample room to steer a small boat out of sight under this over-hanging ledge. In fact there was a spacious grotto of fifty feet in length and extending into the rock more than twenty feet.

The present stage of water left a smooth level surface of rock forming a perfect floor to this grotto, that was now about two feet higher than the highest point reached by the splashing of the waves as they rolled under the ledge. There was a distance of ten feet from this floor to the over-hanging rock above, and here and there at almost regular intervals of ten or more feet huge pillars that seemed harder than the surrounding rock, and being impervious to the action of the elements, stood up as supports to the jutting ledges. These supports gave the cavern the appearance of an approach to some ancient temple.

They were both struck with the grotesqueness of the place and almost simultaneously expressed the desire to spend a day in this cool, secluded spot. Ashton pulled the boat along side the floor and they took in the surroundings. "Plenty of light to read and write by," said Ashton. "A fine place to swing a hammock from between these two center columns," said Julia. "Behind this point the boat can be dragged up and protected from beating against the rocks," observed Ashton.

"Let us see," said Julia, "we want two rugs, an ottoman, hammock, table with folding legs, two chairs and—"

"A lunch," it is not necessary to say from whom this last suggestion came. Ashton looked at his watch, "six o'clock, seven will be good time for breakfast, nine will find us here for the day."

To an active mind the present moment is nothing, life is all in the future, there is in fact no present, you say now, it is gone, it is a part of the past. The space between that moment and nine o'clock was nothing, it was the pulling of the boat to the shore, breakfasting, getting the necessary outfit and returning, simply a condition precedent to the day's doings. To the mind of such a man as that to mention a thing, was the doing, when commenced it was finished, for at the moment of beginning he was contemplating the joy there would be in the thing itself.

As he said, nine o'clock found him there, busy with ropes swinging the hammock between the pillars, Julia had spread out the rugs, unfolded the chairs and set up the table, and was now unpacking her writing material, for she had decided to write to Mary Forsythe, yes, Mary had a right to her father's name since he had again taken her home.

When all was done Ashton began looking for his books, books were as necessary to him as the air he breathed. He had brought a good supply of novels, French, and otherwise.

He had decided to read again Hugo's masterpiece. The character of the hero was a study that filled his mind with

something more than delight. He read and re-read his escape, his journey, his ponderings, his self-sacrifice.

He had secured his boat, as at first contemplated, and now approached it, took out his bundle of books, turned round, and stood rooted to the spot, he had an eye for the weird, the grotesque, the unusual, the unexpected. For the moment he forgot that he had taken part in transforming this tenantless cavern into a habitation fit for the gods. Julia was seated at the table with a package of stationery before her, preparatory to writing her friend. Ashton had never been so conscious of her beauty as at this moment. She wore a silk cap of sky blue, with shield in front and rear, a pale blue flannel dress. that even Worth must have pronounced superb, if he had been there to have seen it. It was an entire garment, devoid of all that fuss and flounce, and furbelow, and overskirt, with front and back drapery, cut with a view to be worn with corset, and reeds and "stays and guys," as a sailor would say. It was fastened in front with a silk cord laced through eyelets, the collar was thrown back far enough to expose the neck and throat. The lacing of the cord was from the waist up to the throat and tied in a bow holding a boquet of moss roses and heliotrope. The skirt was plain, long enough for modesty, and short enough for convenience. Her feet were protected by a pair of kid shoes with flat heels and square toes, and in gentlemen's wear would be called "Southern tie."

Ashton approached her, book in hand, he had intended climbing into the hammock, now he felt that would be—to

use a lawyer's expression—to remote. He pushed the ottoman near her feet and sat upon it.

"You said it would do you good to have me say one thing aloud this morning. I am so impressed with that dress that I must say so aloud."

"Thank you," she said, "I suppose that's the proper thing to say even when your partner compliments you on your taste in dress."

"By the way," said she, "have you ever noticed the sublime folly among women on the subject of dress and how it all fades away when they have any thing else to do, or occupy their minds? I have observed the factory girls, shop girls, the clerks, the cashiers, the stenographers, the typewriter operators, all wear something plain, attractive, neat, I fancy that even on a Sunday, a holiday, their dresses are plainer, neater, and more becoming than the over-dressed women who do nothing but dress."

"True, it is over-dress, the same thing can be seen in the under-graduate, glorying in his over-education that all fades away when he gets out into the world and is compelled to make some practical use of what he has acquired. "And further more," said Ashton, "it all bespeaks one thing," "and that one thing is this," said Julia, "that when women find their places and vocations they will drop their vanity and nonsense about dress and be plain, sensible, people."

Ashton began looking at the chair, the rug, the ottoman, and the hammock.

"What now?"

"I thought I would occupy the hammock, but since you look so remarkably cool and comfortable," and he might have said lovely, "I have decided to lie down here by your side."

She arranged her writing material, while he overturned the chair, making an incline plane, then spread out the rug and lay down in a half reclining, half sitting posture close by her. She had hardly become accustomed to his snow-white curls. There was such a contrast between this and his once raven locks. She looked out on the water now shimmering beneath the July sunshine. Her thoughts were far away. She almost shuddered. She put out her left hand to see if it was really Ashton or a phantom. The real presence was so comforting to her that she let her hand rest on his head. He was so well satisfied that his open book lay pressed against his breast beneath his folded arms.

What a study for an artist. Is there anything wanting to complete the picture? Nothing. And nothing wanted is bliss. It is the collecting of the lights and shadows from the brow of the Infinite. It is the stage setting by the direction of the supreme intelligence, and that is happiness.

The greater the gratitude, the higher the appreciation, the fewer the words, the less demonstration. So with grief. The more crushing, the more deadening and benumbing the effects.

Laughter and tears are but surface indications. Great joy blots out the dimples of the one as great grief seals up the fountains of the other. Julia had neither tears for the

one nor laughter for the other, and her gratitude to Mary Forsythe had been conveyed by a look and warm embrace that both minds perfectly comprehended. She now determined to say in words, poor though they might be, at least an earnest of what she felt.

As she looked out upon the waters now sparkling and dancing in the morning sunlight and fanned by a stiffening breeze, she said to herself, "could occasion more befitting be selected to aid me in this blessed privilege?" Her full and overflowing heart seemed to ooze out at her fingers' ends as she had never known it to do before. It was inspiration, nothing less. Never once did her left hand leave its resting place in Ashton's hair. Maybe it was the brilliant and strong mind of the man roused from its very depths by the thoughts and remembrances of his anxiety, his dread, his awful expectations and sufferings that now communicated and blended with the woman's heart and affections.

If Julia's mind and heart had joined forces in giving "shape and hue and odor and sweet sound" to her sense of gratitude, Ashton's mind had not been less active, or less fervent in a different direction.

It was the troop of spirits that hovered over the pale form of the immortal Keats as seen by the "inner eye" of "that phantom among men."

"Desires and adorations,
Winged persuasions and veiled destinies,
Splendors, and glooms, and glimmering incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight fantasies,
And sorrow, with her family of sighs,

And pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes."

He had been engaged in a retrospect of all his past. For another one of the countless times he had speculated on his origin, his father, his mother, who he was, how he came to bear the name of Ashton, why Judge Bullion had manifested so much interest in him, why he had placed him in daily association with—to him—the loveliest and noblest of women, and enjoined upon him the only condition of his life, "not to bestow his affections without the Judge's consent." How little he knew, at the time of making this rash promise of his affections. "Bestow," yes, that was the word, the precise word, that was just what he said. "Bestow," to stow, to make use of, to lay out or up, to give, to confer.

Had the learned Judge spoken after due deliberation, and reflection? It must be so, he was accustomed to give construction to the import of language and words. His life had been given up to the study of words. His first introduction to the study of landed property brought him in contact with a sort of legal chestnut, a query as to the meaning of words, " whether the word was of limitation of the estate or words of purchase." He could not have used the word without due deliberation. But here was a condition, a part of himself that he had no knowledge of at the time he had assented to the Judge's wish. His affections did not consult him, they did not say, " you are our master, you have the prerogative to 'bestow' us upon whomsoever you see fit." Not at all. He did not possess his affections. His affections possessed

him. They had taken possession of his will, and had bestowed him. At that very hour he was being given away by his affections. He was conferred upon Julia Bullion, and no power in his being could separate him from her. It was "love," "and against such there is no law."

What was he to do? Was he to go to his senior partner and confess, to acknowledge that his affections had conquered and ask to be released from his obligations? That looked like an easy thing to do. The easiest thing in the world, no explanation needed, just ask to be absolved. Then every thing came back to him and if it was a decision between approaching his benefactor, his partner, to be absolved from his vow, his promise, or go forth to face the cannon, he would have said the latter. And why? Heaven alone may know, mortals never. We would go out on the streets, the highways and ask alms of a stranger, but we would die before he would lay bare our hearts to our nearest of kin.

Then Julia's mention of other thoughts that he did not utter aloud, in their talk earlier in the day, to what did she refer? For nearly two years his life had been made up of question marks, relating mostly to himself, he had been a pendulum vibrating between fear and hope. To-day he was a free man, vindicated from the charges preferred against him by circumstances. To the one woman by his side, aided by another equally as self-sacrificing, as heroic, he owed his life. He had been accustomed to look upon woman through the lawyer's spectacles.

"Something better than his dog,
A little dearer than his horse."

Now to him she was not only his equal, but his superior. He had interviewed himself to that extent that he knew that he never would broach the subject to his senior partner; whether he would to his junior partner was a most perplexing question.

He had an inkling of the fact that Judge Bullion had once or twice attempted to "bestow" her affections on Fred Bullion, that he was unable to deliver the goods, that she had declined even to meet him at dinner at home. This looked like a strong presumption that the Judge had intended that the partnership should extend no further than to the practice of the law. But again, if he had any objections to anything farther, it certainly would be an easy matter to say as much. The Judge was not a blind man, he ought to comprehend the situation and appreciate the relation now existing. Did his silence give consent, or did he intend to remain silent in the presence of all these surroundings and thereby be estopped from asserting his right to say what Ashton should do with his affections?

Ashton's heart was a large part of himself, and his spirit of self-sacrifice was equally as potent an influence as his affections. He was one of the very few men who could appreciate fully Mrs. Browning's lines,

"We walked too straight for fortune's end,
We loved too true to keep a friend."

He preferred to make an immolation of his heart upon

the altar of his affections, rather than carry about the consciousness that another's love was unrequited; that if his position had been different she might have loved Fred more than she ever could love him. His tenderness and spirit of self-sacrifice might be rewarded in the future by the possession of a conscience void of offense. It certainly did not tend to make him happy in the present.

That man whose love is so true, so loyal to the woman he adores that he will voluntarily surrender his right to press his claim for fear that she does not know her own heart, or that she would be happier if she bestowed her wealth of affection on another, may have the approbation of his own conscience, but the world will either call him a fool or a knave, or an unhappy mixture of both, and the thing he calls abnegation will be credited to him as cold-blooded hypocrisy, or something else equally as complimentary.

He that knows the good and does it not, because he prefers the wrong, may rightfully be considered as guilty of sin. But he that knows the good and hesitates, hoping that another may do better, ought not to be adjudged a sinner.

These were some of the thoughts that were being analyzed by Ashton while Julia was pouring out her full heart to Mary.

As discourteous as it may seem to the cultivated reader to have placed before him the private correspondence that was only meant for the eyes of another, yet the liability of giving offense is hazarded simply to show how differently their two minds and hearts were disposed each toward the

other. The first page of Julia's letter to Mary had slipped from under her hand. It brings the blush to coldly set it down here, but it runs as follows:

"HAPPY ISLAND" LAKE, July 13th.

"MY MARY--

"DEAREST AMONG WOMEN: To-day we are happy. Yes, extremely happy. The zest of it all is in the gratitude we owe you. Our pulses beat double in thanks and every throb blesses you.

"When we sue God for ourselves, He hears that name of thine, and our eyes are moist with the tears of three.

"Your weary footprints from Paris to the secluded spot beneath the shadows of the Alps are all strewn with the choicest forget-me-nots of our two memories; with the brightest immortelloes of our undying loves. Every day the choicest and purest flowers of our love and gratitude are piled and heaped upon our memories of your self-sacrifice for us.

"So long as the roseate tints of each returning morning shall continue to flood the soul's east window with divine surprise, it will cause new blossoms of gratitude to open and bloom in our loves. So long as each ray reflected from the pale-faced moon shall kiss the closing petals with silvery lips, your memory shall have the sweetest of their perfumes.

"Your hands bridged the chasm of our night. Your strength made us strong. Your faith took the troubled Gallilee to your bosom and it was still. Your hands brushed the mist from my eyes and nerved his hand to spring the bolts and set him free.

"Your feet were swifter than the roe upon the mountain. Your tongue was more than refined silver in its speech, and more than golden in its silence.

"Your sympathy and love were more to our sad hearts than corn, and wine and oil. Your thoughts were sandals to the flying feet that left no foot-prints to guide the pursuer. Your discretion was the thick bosses upon the bucklers that girded our loins. Your forethought chained the lions in the way. Your tears opened the fountains, and the parched ground became pools of living water and streams flowed in the desert. Your prayers strengthened the weak hands, and confirmed the feeble knees.

"Your voice caused us to lift our eyes and behold God coming with a recompense to save us.

"Your wisdom made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.

"And oh thou, blessed among women, Mary, dearest, through your

interposition, and aid, and strength, and counsels, and wisdom, and love, God hath to-day wiped all tears away.

"Even though I try to tell you how much—"

Julia had finished her letter. Ashton had broken off his reverie. It was the hour for lunch, blest hour of dinner.

CHAPTER XXX

"And paradise was paradise the more,
Known once and forever barred against satiety."

LAUGHTER has been designated the dividing line between beast and man, the latter being the only animal that laughs. He is likewise the only animal that prepares his food in advance and eats at regular intervals.

That man who does not look forward to the hour of dinner with anticipations of pleasure and delight, especially when he expects to dine with his best friend, is lacking in the chief elements of a generous and genial nature, and is destined to suffer with either indigestion or gout, and miss half of the real pleasure in life that is worth living for.

"He that hath a merry heart hath a continual feast," and when merry hearts join in a feast the pleasure is increased tenfold. Julia and Ashton would both have subscribed to the truthfulness of this statement and also that the most enjoyable dish in any *menu* is the dish of conversation.

While these two persons had been students and partners for more than twelve years they had been constantly together, save the internal in which Ashton had been under the ban of the law. They had come to know each other's minds on every subject, save and except one that had been interdicted when they first crossed the threshold of their profession.

They had been together constantly and there was no

necessity for any arrangements for meeting, no pangs at partings, and not until the happening of the death of Dr. Arlington and their separation did they realize how necessary they were to each other's happiness. But the time must come, the moment to decide whether on the good or the evil side, and they must needs know each other's hearts.

The book that Ashton had held so quietly on his breast all the forenoon lay open on the rock beside the ottoman.

"Was you taking in that book by absorption, I noticed that you did not read any?"

"Your hand on my head started a train of thought that was of vastly more moment to me than the reflections of the hero of Hugo, and I was loathe to give it up."

"I noticed that, but what started this reverie, was it the book?"

"Not the book."

"No." The intonation Julia gave this often fatal, monosyllabic word was foreign to its usual meaning, half exclamatory, half interrogatory, the blending of surprise and question far more expressive than, What! "you surprise me, let's hear it?" It is a wondrous use of the human voice that tells one of the pleasure of the surprise and indicates a wish that one proceed without the harsh breaking in of request to tell the thing one would rather volunteer than be requested to relate.

"Well, yes, no, it was not the book, it was suggested by that little episode of this morning, in which you drew out of me the cause for my talking to myself."

"I remember," with a twinkle in her eye, "you have been thinking thoughts that would do you more good if you could think them aloud, would they?"

"Precisely."

"You remember what Mark Antony said about his dying, 'once on a time,' 'that no hour would be more fit than Cæsar's death hour.' I presume your thoughts were happy thoughts and no hour would be more fit than this hour, kindly proceed." She folded her arms and said, "I'll be the Portia of this court, proceed, sir."

"If it is anything nominated in the bond the law will allow it, and this court will award it."

"But hold. I do not like the idea of being made a shylock of without my consent."

"This court, sir, will save the mark," with mock severity, "proceed, sir."

"Will I begin with the stereotyped phrase that stands at the beginning of all fairy stories, 'Once on a time?' I say once on a time."

"All on a time."

"Who's on a time?"

"I call 'time.' This court cannot be trifled with."

"Without any intention to exhibit any contempt for this court, permit me to observe in passing, this court seems to be altogether too familiar with an expression more applicable to that other court where the contestants shake hands before they begin. Shake?"

"Inasmuch as you have so slightly concealed your

contempt for this court, the contestants will *not* shake before they begin."

"Well, then, if this court pleases."

"This court awaits your pleasure."

"The pound of flesh, metaphorically speaking, that I am about to present to this court for its consideration, may truthfully be said to be the pound nominated in the bond, but unlike the one nominated in the bond, it is not the one nearest the heart, but that troublesome thing, the heart itself."

"You are no shylock. He would have the ducats first, daughter afterward."

"Does this court presume to intimate that I seek to reverse the expression of the old Jew, have the daughter first and the ducats afterward?"

"This court does not entertain the thought for a moment that you mean to seek anything of the kind; that you wish to substitute a caricature of shylock for the real man, to swap his presence for a 'personified epigram.'"

"You are the 'Noble Judge.'"

"Fear not. You shall not fare worse than did the 'Second Daniel.'"

"Worse, did you say?"

"I did."

"Then, shall I fare as well?"

"Do you desire more than is nominated in the bond?"

"No more."

"You stand on the terms of the bond; you care only for the—"

"Let me draw the decree; at least let me insist on one line, 'that the giver be included in the gift.'"

"It would be more convenient if the gift remain in the giver."

"We accept the court's amendment."

"But to lay aside this badinage," said Ashton, "we have no shylock here," placing his hand on his heart, "and thank God we have more than a Portia."

"That is high compliment; higher never was bestowed."

"It is more than deserved."

"Portia was a doctor of the laws, and well skilled withal."

"Yes, and we have here one skilled in the law, and what is of thrice the value, *A Woman*."

"Do you really think then, that the woman is of more value than the 'lawyer?'"

"She has been of more value than many lawyers."

"Is that the thing you wanted to say aloud?"

"That is *one* thing that I wanted to say aloud?"

"Your emphasis on one indicates that there is more than one thing that you have to say."

"I do." He drew the ottoman to her side, "permit me."

"Certainly."

He sat facing her, his left arm across her lap, his right hand holding hers. It is easier to think than it is to put

your thoughts into exact phraseology, for oft the feeling is fleeter than slow-footed thought.

"And now that I come to speak aloud about it, I don't know that there is much room for talking."

"If you had not said the thing in the bond was hearts, I probably would not insist on your talking, but since we have talked of every thing but that, just for the once forget that I am a lawyer, like yourself, and think of me as a woman."

"Yes, as I said before, of more value than many law-years. And since, as a woman, you have shown yourself superior to all the lawyers, I have come to see how much you are to me."

"We have both had an experience."

"True, but I have experienced how strong you are, and how helpless I have been."

"But you under-estimate yourself. If I had happened to have been in your stead, you would have turned heaven and earth, but you would have found the guilty party. Your voice would have been more eloquent than all the words that fell ever from angels' lips. Yours would have been more than 'trumpet-tongued.'"

He pressed her hand against his moist cheek and said never a word. His mind had gone back to that crucial hour.

"It could not have had more effect upon any jury than your mute lips had upon those moral cowards."

A gust of wind had blown Julia's letter to Mary Forsythe

from the corner of the table and fell in her lap. Ashton picked it up.

He glanced at it. It had something in it that made him feel that he wanted to read. "Can I?" She assented. When he had finished he looked up at her, his eyes were full of tears.

"Thank God, bless God," he said, and motioned for a pen that lay on the table. He wrote in his clear, bold hand, "Mary, kindly consider that both our hearts and hands were joined in penning this, and that the tears of gratitude have fallen on these pages from the eyes of two.—John Ashton."

"Mary can never thank you for that letter as I do. Our thoughts this morning remind me of Macaulay's two different men in his description of the Puritan. You remember that, do you not?"

"How does that run?"

"The one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious."

"Not exactly in those attributes," said Ashton, always abasing himself for fear of appearing egotistic, "but in two channels as wide apart."

"Allow me—I will accept one in the first, gratitude, and apply one in the second to you."

"Which one?"

"Well, two, if you please."

He ran them over audibly, proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious.

"Yes, three."

"Which three?" She drew herself up to her full height, folded her arms across her bosom, and in slow and sonorous tone repeated "proud, calm, sagacious."

"No, no; not the first nor last."

"Yes, and I'll add another, too—self-sacrificing."

"Why do you say self-sacrificing—did you read my thoughts this morning?"

"No, but I read your life though in your daily acts, thoughts and deeds, and it makes up one chain of self-sacrifice."

"That's more than I deserve, Julia."

"You ask me if I read your thoughts this morning? No, not exactly, but I can divine some things from what you say about your spirit of self-sacrificing."

"Well, what is it?"

"You was thinking as you always do, of sacrificing yourself for something or somebody."

"How do you know that?"

"I don't know, only that I do know that you are as far from being like other men as they are from being anything but selfish."

"Do you admire selfishness in men?"

"Well, that all depends."

"Upon what!"

"How far it is carried."

"How far should it be carried?"

"It would not be unreasonable in a man to hold pleasure and enjoyment for himself at about the same market

value that he would place upon them if he was about to bestow them upon another."

"If there were none to practice this lack of selfishness, or unselfishness if you like that better, what state of affairs would that bring about?"

"Then there would be none to accept this self-sacrificing of yours."

"And then you would not have the pleasure of writing this letter of yours, showing how much you appreciate this very thing, self-sacrificing."

"I would not abrogate the golden rule."

"What would you call Mary's and your part in my rescue?"

"That was an extreme case. She did what she did because she loved me, but that was not the primary cause, and it will, no doubt, astonish you when you hear what she said to me about it. I had failed to analyze it and probably never would if she had not told me. She said, 'the pendulum of my heart had been swung so far into the regions of hate, that when it returned it passed into the region of extreme love and pity.'"

"If I had not known her I might have been astonished, but she said and did so many things out of the ordinary that I came to believe her capable of most any thing."

"She is truly a most remarkable woman."

"I will always remember a remark she made in reply to my saying that I could never find words to convey my appreciation of what she had done for me, and that she was

doing altogether too much for me. Her reply was, 'yo are not selfish enough for that, Mr. Ashton.'"

"True, and selfishness is never so apparent in the se fish person, as it is when hit off by self-sacrifice in another.

"Is the last remark an abstraction or an observation? inquired Ashton.

"That is an observation taken from life by myself."

"How do you account for this extreme selfishness i some persons and the exact opposite in others?"

"Society has two rules, one for man and another fo woman, and you are on the wrong side. You place your self on the side that has been allotted to us and that is wha makes you so conspicuous."

"I was not aware of that."

"I know it, and many is the time I had a mind to tel you of it, but it was so delightful to see you on our sid that I feared that if you discovered it, you would desert us.'

"I have often thought that society was wrong, that civ ilization was wrong, and half believe that originally there wa but one law for both sexes."

"I am of the same opinion, and in the not far distan future it will be so again. You know that I have neve talked much of my mother," said Julia. At that word "mother," a pained expression came over Ashton's face.

"I know," said Ashton.

"But you do not know why."

"No."

"Because —"

"Because why?"

"Because society killed her."

"No!"

"Yes, killed her; and the painful thing about it to me that she realized it so keenly."

There was a gleam of light in Ashton's eyes, such as nounces that an inspiration has come to one. "Now I nk I understand the cause for that intense reserve between ur father and you. Does he stand for society?"

"Precisely that."

"Then that is the reason for one fact always so notica-, and yet so unexplainable to me."

"What is that?"

"That so many things he practices as a virtue, you the and hate, and scorn, as a vice."

"Truly, and this has been one of the great trials of my ."

"I think I can explain that."

"If you can I shall consider you my benefactor."

"He has been such an absolute devotee to the law—d society is nothing but a law unto itself—that it amounts religion with him."

"God save the mark, if that is religion."

"I say, to him."

"Yes, I understand you."

"I do not think you do, quite, if you will pardon me saying so, and permit me to explain what I mean."

"Go on."

"With him, I say, it amounts to religion. In other words, he affects to believe it, just as society affects to believe it, while in his heart of hearts he believes no such thing. He and society would fain believe that this two-rule law that you spoke of was right, and at the same time they both see and feel daily what an abject failure it is."

"Good, you are a philosopher. I will have to secure you an opportunity to air your wisdom."

"Honor bright?"

"Yes, truly."

"Now that you applaud my thought on that subject, allow me to say another thing that I think is caused by this two-rule law, and I want to thank you for coining that expression."

"What expression?"

"Two-rule law.

"I did not know that that was original with me."

"I do not know that it is, but I do not know of its being just so happily or tersely expressed by any one before."

"I bow very low, thank you."

"Why all this ado?"

"Because you are again out of man's beaten way of the high and mighty prerogative that scorns being taught by a woman."

"A compliment, then, you are bestowing upon me that you think any other man would not have fished for."

"No, indeed. But do you really think I compliment you?"

"I do,"

"Well, don't tell any other man that you think so, for f you do, he will be seeking to hold an inquest of lunacy on ome one, and I don't think he will select me for the sub- ect."

"This two-rule law has divided the world into two lasses on the line of the sexes. The so-called weaker is ontinually sacrificing its pleasures, forever submitting itself o pain, physical and mental, until with most men 'woman' s but another name for a pain in the side and a headache, ntil she stands for weakness, debility and disease, and worse han that, to the abridgement and circumscribing of her en- ironments, her avenues for work, wages and personal lib- rty. And while it has done this for the woman, it has done vhat you have just called my attention to, and more than hat, has made him selfish, brutal, unnatural, and an abnor- nal animal."

"Do you really attribute man's selfishness then to this wo-rule law?"

"To a great extent man is what his surroundings make im. He is continually receiving at the expense of her giv- ng, and the inequality is certainly great."

"How will you correct this inequality?"

"Draw a line on her self-sacrifice, cut off her unselfish- ess, and that will put the proper restraint on his growing ppetite of selfishness. Teach man that it is base, ignoble, or him to thus continually accept this pleasure and gratifi- ation at the hands of woman; that it is at the expense not

only of her generosity and nobleness of soul, but at the expense of her health and life; that if this constant giving, this self-sacrificing is elevating an ennobling to her, that it is positively degrading and ignoble in him to be always receiving. That the blessings that flow from giving and receiving must have a limit; that beyond that limit the blessing becomes a positive curse; that is, as we debase and degrade ourselves morally, just so sure we destroy and debase her mentally and physically."

"That is my position exactly, that it is absolutely necessary for us to insist upon our rights, that we are bound both morally and physically to assert ourselves; for if these things are of value to men they are surely of as much value to us; if it is worth a big, broad-shouldered man's time to stand up and insist upon the enjoyment of his rights and privileges, it is equally as important for me to do likewise."

"And it will never come to pass that your rights will be respected until you do insist upon enjoying them."

"There is another thing of more importance than even that to us, for it affects the whole as a unit—that is, if the gain to you is just equally balanced by the loss to me, then there is no advancement in the entire mass, and as you put it, what is ignoble in you is injurious to me, and both of us are losers."

"That is what makes society such a screaming farce; we affect, all of us, that woman shall be absolutely pure—absolutely woman, absolutely dependent, yet all the time giving, while man can be absolutely anything—nothing, and still be

respected and looked up to as the lord of creation. The facts are every day knocking this dry rot and mildew into smithereens, and then the truly good flout their mantles about their ears and try to hide the dirt and scandal, vainly concealing their utter lack of belief in the doctrine, and fearing that somebody will find out that they are no better than the other wicked mortals. Turn the microscope away from them by attracting attention to some other weak and already exposed and fallen creature."

The sun had crept round until its setting rays were now throwing lengthened shadows on the floor of the grotto, and suggested that they take their departure. The hammock had swung empty all day without an occupant. The books had been unread. Ashton's reverie was half untold. He was, in fact, as far from telling his real perplexity to his junior partner as he was from making known his troubles to his senior. But he had been repaid for all the time he had spent in the putting of this grotto in habitable shape. He was living in full anticipation of the near future. He felt amply paid and congratulated himself upon the progress he had made.

Every to-morrow reflects the thoughts of to-day, and we go on, and on, and on, in this ceaseless round until the darkness of the certain shadows that hide the other inane from our view shroud us in thick night and Lethe's dreamless ooze washes our names and faces from the remembrance of men and we are laid away among the unremembered throng.

CHAPTER XXXI

"You must compare positions at great distances from one another in time, before you can tell rightly whither things are tending."

THERE is a bitter taste in the mind from over-thought, as there is a disagreeable taste in the mouth from over-eating, and it was several days before either of them mentioned the grotto or the thoughts they had there discussed. They slept, fished, read novels, went boating, but steered clear of the grotto.

Ashton had reasoned himself out of the feeling that he was either a martyr or a hero in his abnegation, and the reflex had carried him as far in the one direction as his former thoughts had taken him in the opposite course.

If he had felt before that he had sacrificed himself or was about to do such a thing, he now realized how small that sacrifice would have been in comparison to what he was about to ask of Julia.

"Would he do it? No, never." He had asked himself this question and made answer without feeling that he had done any great deed of unselfish devotion.

"Could they be happier than they were by taking any steps that would lead to more intimate relations?"

When a man talks he is endangering his best interests, many times; but when he writes letters he is laying a snare for his feet, he is digging a pit wherein to fall. Likewise

doth man put himself, his very soul, in jeopardy when he fain would draw the sword of argument. Job was all right until he allowed himself to engage in argument, and then he found that he was all wrong. And it continues to be so, even unto this day. But when a man begins to catechise himself he is in more danger than if he should attempt to reason with a woman. Ashton knew the temper of his partner's mind too well to presume too much on her ignorance of any subject. She did not feign surprise at any statement that he had made to draw her out. Her interest in the conversation in the grotto arose from quite another source. She was glad to know that he so well appreciated the shallow nonsense and hollow pretenses of society.

The advancing soldier with loaded gun in hand rushes headlong into the thickest of the fray. The artilleryman busily engaged in manning his gun forgets everything but his duty, and shrinks not when the advancing enemy has swept everything before it and rushes madly toward his piece, fixed bayonet in hand; but place these same men where they have nothing to do or engage their minds while the battle rages all round, and the bravest would break and fly like wild deer. What is true of men in arms, is true of men in other walks of life, but not so generally understood.

The question marks that arose in Ashton's mind at the time of his reverie in the grotto had swept everything before them, and at one time proclaimed the beginning of the retreat, were now falling back before the marshaled and better trained forces that had shown themselves in his conversation

with his partner. He had turned his own guns upon himself with telling effect, and now he was groping in darkness and wandering aimlessly about, the unconscious somnambulist, in search of a vanished dream.

When he proposed to make hearts the subject of conversation she bade him speak; to forget that she was a lawyer like himself and remember that she was a woman. She had led him into making statements that force conclusions upon the mind open to conviction, in a way that was irresistible. He must needs look for some way out of this; to use a lawyer's technicality, he must "confess and avoid." Confess that what he had said was true, but avoid the force and effect by new matter. Use the lawyer's art and make the worse appear the better reason. But how? Take refuge behind the precedents of the past. Be a lawyer. What does that mean?

The life of one of England's greatest lawyers has been characterized as "the checkered spectacle of so much glory and so much shame," "at one time far in the van, and at another time far in the rear of his generation." This is not so much the fault of the lawyer as the fault of the civilization that produced him, supported him, encouraged him, made him live, thrive and fatten on the spoils of crime, lust, hate, greed, wrong, and oppression, that he had to deal with. There is no man so conservative as the lawyer, because no man is so often forced back into the dark recesses of precedent for defense. He supports the barbarism of the present by the force and effect of the barbaric past. He

makes you drink of the present bitter waters of Marah by leading you back into the dark rolling waters of the past, and bids you listen to what the "successive waves of ascetic fanaticism in generations long dead" are saying as they break on the shores of to-day. Why? Because the interests of his client demand it. Commands him. The false pretense, the sham, prudery, vice "on the ground floor" must needs keep the scuttle closed or the equally good "in the hole" will be on top.

He had said that society and the present civilization were wrong, and she had agreed with him, but when the reflex action sets in, he must fall back on precedent. The divisions of burdens were made on the line of the sexes, he had said; marriage seemed to have fixed that line, and how was he to disturb it? Marriage had been recognized by Him whose "blessed feet" had trod this earth for our advantage, and it would not be with becoming respect to seek to set it aside. But, then, every other substantial doctrine of the Book had been assailed. But not by respectable people. Very respectable people have accepted the modified interpretations of the creation. Yes, of every other essential doctrine that relates to our salvation. Very respectable people have very seriously doubted the story of making the world out of nothing, and having vast quantities of raw material left. Very respectable people of to day are now considering the rules of evidence by which all these things have been proven and accepted, with a view to revise their judgments. If all this be true, why then be so fearful about lay-

ing unholy hands upon this subject that of late years has been so ruthlessly handled by courts, and treated by the law simply as a contract? If it was wrong, why not change it? It suits men as it is. It entails no evil on men, why abrogate it? Men are free from it to that extent that it does not hang clogs on them. If the burden is on woman, let her suffer it; she seems peculiarly adapted to that.

Ashton looked at these straggling troopers as they fled from the field of argument. He concluded that he was not at his best, and would abandon the subject until he had more relish for thought. But it was not always thus easily that a man of Ashton's make-up escapes his thoughts.

"By whose authority are all these opinions thrust upon me? Have I really formulated them, social, political, religious, or have they been ready-made and handed down to me? I am certainly not in accord with this social status; but why should I kick against the pricks? *Cui bono?*"

How many men have asked themselves, "For whose benefit?" and gone on without stopping to make answer? A boy sat stolidly munching bread and cheese; his companion cried out, "don't eat that cheese, its got wrigglers in it." Never a moment did the boy with the cheese heed his cry. "Let 'em wriggle, I can stand it as long as they can." Man is the same boy, only a little taller grown.

How can the modern society "robber-kings and bandit-barons, with vassals to match," go about the world to-day and practice what they do, with the words of Him who spake as never man spake, staring them in the face?

"And if any man sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

Society reverses these words, this teaching, seeing that a man gives up his coat, it takes his cloak also, and then goes about with canting hypocrisy, whining for sacred forms and ceremonies, but the cast-off mantels, of long ago.

Men prate about liberty and freedom and the tyrant turned out, and when the crucial moment comes refuse to apply the doctrine to none save such as are in prison and in bonds. Wait until these who are ignorant become wise, until these slaves are good as slaves — that will be time enough to talk about setting them free.

Ashton was at sea; he felt demoralized. For nothing ever does so completely overwhelm a man's mind as to realize that on examination his preconceived notions and dogmas are vulnerable and untenable. He dismissed the subject from his mind and decided not to mention it again. If Julia was interested to any great extent she would find a way to bring it up.

They passed the time very pleasantly and profitably as well, until September was near at hand. They had received several letters from Judge Bullion. One of the date of July 15th had affected them both very much, it was so weird, so strange, so unlike the senior partner, that they dared not make it a subject of conversation. As they read it then it was a thing full of dark imaginings, grave and gay, solemn

and facetious. The last one was dated "At home," August 28, and was addressed to Ashton alone. The good news that he had promised for September first was the unexpected again and was just the reverse. The letter was very brief and very crisp. The Judge was home prostrated with the heat, and thought he would be better if he had them with him. There was a shade of sadness about it that bordered on the pathetic. The hand-writing was not that of the senior partner—it lacked the keen, sharp, crisp way of putting things as was his wont. It partook more of the nature of a man crushed by some unforeseen dread than prostration from heat.

They decided not to prolong their stay but start at once. With them to decide was to act, and the next steamer that touched found them on board as passengers bound for home. It often happens that we become better acquainted with our bosom friends on a long and protracted journey than in years of interrupted meetings and partings.

They had decided to take the water route as far as Montreal, and from thence by rail. This took some days and gave ample time to compare thoughts as to the letter written by their senior partner.

On the second morning out they took up their position forward under the awning spread as a protection against the sun. Ashton broached the subject by making a casual remark concerning the letter of July 15th. Julia looked agitated and said, "John, I feel that there is something unusual going to happen."

"Why?"

"Father would never have sent for Fred Bullion to meet him so far away from home for anything trivial."

"I had thought of that."

"Can you assign any reason for your father's course?"

"I can."

"Would you mind telling?"

"Not in the least."

"I would be pleased to hear your reason, for I must confess that it has given me no little concern."

"You are aware, I believe, that father has always wanted me to say that I would marry Fred."

"Yes, I have had intimations of that and did in part believe it."

"What were your reasons for so believing?"

"By putting the condition your father imposed upon me along side of his conduct on several occasions."

"What condition did he impose on you, and when?"

"Never to bestow my affections on any one without his consent, as far back as the days when I began my legal studies with him."

"Then he had his mind on us."

"It looks that way to me."

"Why?"

"Now you have propounded a question which I have asked myself a great many times and have never been able to give at least a guess."

"Then you have thought of this before?"

"Yes, and it has always returned to that self-same question, Why?"

"No man has ever gone and said to the woman he loved just the little speech he had fixed up in his mind when he had decided to propose a marriage contract. If Ashton could have lived a thousand years with Julia he would have seized on this occasion to make his purpose known, for he realized that there would never come a time more opportune."

"There is only one way for us to solve this mystery," said he.

"What way is that?"

"To marry."

"Really?"

"Really."

"When?"

"Now."

"How can we?"

"You are a lawyer, Julia."

"I hold myself out to the world as such."

"Then you know that we two persons are the only ones privy to the contract."

There was a sort of twinkle in her eye as she said. "There must be witnesses."

"We can have it properly reduced to writing, signed, sealed, attested and recorded at any time."

"Then, Julia Bullion, I offer myself as your husband."

"I accept you as such and promise to be your wife."

He placed his hand in her's and said, "It is done, so we both say."

She bowed assent. They arose and for a long time in silence they walked to and fro across the beam of the steamer.

Their lives passed as before as though nothing had happened. On the 8th of September they found themselves once more at home.

CHAPTER XXXII

"No place like home."

AND it is a relief to know sometimes that there is not. There was no manifestation that the house was occupied. Julia ran up the front steps and rang the bell. By the time Ashton reached her side the door opened softly and a servant's head peeped from behind the heavy oak panels.

"O it's you, come in."

"Where is father?"

A finger was lifted as if to command silence. Ashton stepped in and closed the door softly behind him, everything was dark. The servant moved noiselessly about the house and before speaking tried the parlor door to be sure no one was within hearing.

"Your father's in bed."

"Why do you keep such a sharp look-out for the parlor door?"

"She's in there?"

"Whose is in there?"

"Why, that woman."

"What woman?"

"I don't know."

"Did you inquire her name?"

"I did, but she refused to give it."

"What reply did she make?"

"She said, 'that is no matter, Judge Bullion expects me.'"

"Old or young?"

"She is heavily veiled, but I think her hair is white."

"White, did you say?" That question came from Ashton.

"Yes, sir."

"Is she tall?"

"Yes, sir."

"Dressed in black?"

"Yes, sir."

"Carry a fan and hand satchel?"

"Yes, sir."

"Gold eye-glasses on her shoulder?"

"Yes, sir."

Ashton's face was white as marble.

"Do you know who it is?" asked Julia.

"No."

"You have seen her before?"

"Yes, often."

"Where?"

"In Italy, in Paris, in the Alps."

Julia put her hand on Ashton's arm, looked at the servant still waiting, "Tell father we are here and will be in soon."

"Is this the cause of father's prostration?"

"I think so."

"What does it mean?"

"I can't tell."

"The servant returned. "Your father says he will see the lady in waiting first."

Ashton inquired how long she had been in waiting. The answer, "just came."

"Been here before?"

"Every day for a week; yes, more than a week."

"At regular hours?"

"Always at three o'clock."

"Stay long?"

"Sometimes as late as six."

"How is the Judge?" asked Ashton.

"Always worse after she has been here."

"I did not ask you for that."

"Well, he's very feeble."

"Has she gone in to see him?" asked Julia.

"She has."

She turned and addressed Ashton, "I'll meet you in the drawing-room in half an hour." They both retired. At four, they were both in the drawing-room. After a few minutes' consultation, they called the servant they had previously interviewed. She came.

Ashton directed her to a seat. "Has the Judge given any directions as to this lady?"

"Yes, sir, he has; he told me to answer all calls at the front door, and not allow any one to see her."

"Anything besides that?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"Not to interrupt him while she was with him, or allow any one to come in while she was here."

"Anything further?"

The servant hesitated, looked at Julia, and asked:

"Must I tell?"

"Everything," said Julia.

"Everything?"

"Yes, everything."

"Then you don't know —"

"How could we," said Ashton, "not being here?"

"Well, your father had two letters that seemed to distress him awfully."

"Awfully!" said Julia.

"Yes, awfully, Mam."

"How do you know that?"

"How do I know that?"

"Yes."

"Why, wasn't I there?"

"Where?"

"At the breakfast table."

"What happened at the breakfast table?"

"I brought the first letter to him at the breakfast table, and when he opened and read it, he fell over in a fit, and has not been out of bed since. Isn't that awful enough for you?" said the servant, somewhat uneasily.

"Where is that letter?"

"He held it in his hand, and has it now with the other letters."

"What other letters?"

"Your father gave me the key to his desk, and told me how to find a secret drawer, as he called it, and how to open it."

"Did you find the secret drawer and open it?"

"I did."

"What did you find?"

"A large morocco pocket-book which he said was in there."

"What did you do with the pocket-book?"

"Why, I gave it to him, of course."

"Do you know what was in the pocket-book?"

"It had letters; he took them out and spread them on the bed before him."

"Was you there when he did that?"

"I was, he told me to stay."

"Did he give any reason for your staying?"

"He did, he said, if any thing should happen to him before you and Mr. Ashton came, I was to give the letters to Mr. Ashton. After that he took all the letters together with the last one he got and put them in the book and placed it under his pillow."

"Did you say that he had received another letter since that?"

"Yes, sir."

"When was that?"

"Just before the lady began coming here."

"Has he written any letters since he has been in bed?"

"Yes, sir, two."

"No more?"

"No more, one to you and one to this lady."

"Do you know her name?"

"No, Mam.

"How did you know that it was for her then if you do not know her name?"

"A boy came for the letter."

"Well, what of that?"

"Well, your father told me that a lady would call and that I should admit her."

"Did she come?"

"She did, and this is the lady."

"How do you know that this is the lady to whom my father wrote the letter, not having known to whom the letter was addressed?"

"You see, Mam, it was this way, I asked your father how I would know who to admit, he said she was a tall lady, dressed in black, with white hair, and wears a veil. When this lady came I told her I had orders not to let any one in to see the Judge, and she said, 'I have received a letter from him to-day and have an appointment,' that's how I know, and I then let her in."

"I see," said Ashton, "your curiosity got the better of your breeding."

"Well, couldn't there be more than one woman an-

swering to that description, I didn't want any harm to come to the Judge."

"Your conduct does credit to your heart at least," said Julia, noticing the embarrassment of the servant.

CHAPTER XXXIII

"Before we are alarmed we see correctly; when we are alarmed we see double; and when we have been alarmed we see nothing but trouble."

WHEN Ashton had seen this woman in Paris, in the Alps, in Italy, he had seen her as a tall woman, with white hair, a face of exquisite mould, pale as death, a far-away look in her hungry eyes, he saw her then as a woman only. Now there was something in the visit and actions that alarmed him and he saw her in an entirely different light, he called up all his past recollections of his seeing her in Paris, of the many times he had thought of himself in relation to her, what was she to him, in fact he saw her in two different relations.

Time moved slowly on until six o'clock had arrived, there were no indications of activity or life in the bed room of the Judge; the door was still closed. Ashton and Julia held another consultation, they decided to interrupt the interview and caused an alarm to be made at the door. There was no response. Ashton then resolved to enter. He opened the door.

The Judge was half reclining, half sitting in bed, propped up with pillows. He was resting slightly on his right side, his left hand by his side holding the morocco pocket-book. The lady in black was sitting by his right side, her right hand was clasped in his, her face buried in the pillows, her cheek

pressed against that of the Judge, her left arm was thrown over his head, the fingers lying lightly on his left cheek.

Judge Bullion's mouth was slightly open, his eyes closed as if in sleep, his face was ghastly pale. Ashton approached the bed on the side opposite the lady in black, he touched the Judge on the shoulder, there was no response, no indication of consciousness. He called his name, no answer, he took his wrist, no pulse, he put his hand on the Judge's neck, no indication of life, he explored the region of the heart.

Julia had entered and now stood behind the mysterious figure in black, she lifted the long, black veil, she touched her slightly, no indications that the woman was conscious of her presence.

They were both thoroughly alarmed now and saw nothing but trouble. What next? They stood in mute amazement, awe-struck, dumb.

The two forms were motionless, unconscious, dead!

The small hand satchel was in the woman's lap, half open, a delicately embroidered handkerchief covered the contents. Julia took up the satchel, walked round to where Ashton stood. He lifted the handkerchief, his eyes caught the initials, "E." "A."

Julia then handed him a letter addressed, "Ethel Ashton, No. 9 University Place, City." "Ashton," said he, aloud. They looked at each other, neither spoke. He dropped both letter and handkerchief in the satchel and took the pocket-book from the hand of his dead partner. He

opened it, here were the two letters lately received by him. Another package folded and filed according to the Judge's habit, marked with date of receipt, and the single name written at the top, "Ethel."

These were tied with a blue ribbon, there were three in number. In the bottom of the package was a light roll, carefully wrapped in tissue paper. Ashton handed it to Julia. She unfolded it, as the paper was removed a long, black tress of hair appeared, a slight shudder ran through her frame and she let the entire package fall to the floor. She sank into the nearest chair and covered her face with her hands. Her woman's mind and heart saw everything now.

"O John, I comprehend it all now. O the perfidy of a man's nature. Wicked, wicked, wicked, above all things, and desperately wicked, yes that is holy writ."

"The letters," said Ashton.

"Yes, the letters, let's have them though they kill me as he has my dear mother."

With a voice stifled with emotion, Ashton began:

"PARIS, MAY, 18—.

"MY DEAR: I am so lonely to-day. I saw our dear boy this morning on the Champs Elysees with his tutor. He has grown so tall since I last saw him. How much he looks like his father! I shall always know him, wherever and whenever I see him.

"I wanted so much to speak to him. I can scarcely resist rushing toward him when I see him, and holding him in my arms. If it was just for a moment, it would do this poor, aching, bleeding heart so much good.

"Then I think of what you say, that it would ruin your prospects for life, defeat your re-nomination, bring reproach upon your daughter, and cast a cloud over his young life. You will forgive me for the thought, my dear.

"Yes, that might be the effect of it. It might have something to do with your election, might bring reproach upon your daughter. But how can it cast any cloud over his young life to know that he has a mother? You never think of poor me, now; it is only you, she, him. O forgive me for saying these cruel, harsh, wicked things. I know it is not you, no, no, not you; not your heart, not your head, but society.

"I think sometimes — but I must not think — it drives me mad. I can not see why I should suffer so, so long, so cruel! O will it never end? Will I never be permitted to see my boy, to hold him to my heart, to hear him say, 'Mother,' once? It seems such a trivial thing to you, but then you can't put yourself in a mother's place.

"Next Monday is dear John's birthday. Think of it; ten years old, and never have I heard his voice since the day he was six months old. I have tried to be near enough to him to hear him speak or laugh. I would go to the school, but then I would be acting against your wishes; no, not your wishes, but the wishes society frightens you with. How you have changed since the days — I mean the nights — when I felt your strong arms about me. How brave you looked then! How defiant your eye when you said, 'society was not your master, you was nobody's slave, you did not fear its beck and nod.' I believed you then, I trusted you then, I thought your love could tide you over all things. How I am deceived, mocked, jeered, scoffed at, and scorned, and derided, and ridiculed. No, you were mistaken then. Society is your master, you are its slave. You said society was no better than you. I granted that then, and I have felt since then that you are no better than society. You said you were above customs and laws, that against love there was no law. No, but there is *fear*, though, and that is *law* with you now.

"'Not yet,' 'not yet,' so far off. It seems so far in the future. It dies away on the wings of the thick night. Will it ever be? O my dear, tell me, for heaven's sake tell me again for fear that I go mad. Will it ever be? Don't chide me, don't scold me, don't put me off in silence, but tell me, will it ever be?

"Until then, ever your own,

"ETHEL."

"PARIS.

"MY DEAR: I have your letter of June 13th. It seems so little, so poor, to say I thank you.

"Words can not tell it. They are too weak-winged to bear my feelings to you. You are elected now. You could afford to snap your fingers at all the prudery of your nasty-nice friends, your wicked enemies. But you won't. Your heart is full of kindness, of love; your head so cruel, so full of fear.

"You say they would sneer at you, 'Judge Bullion married a former paramour.' Yes, a paramour, but the mother of your son. Think of that. He is entitled to your protection, to your name. You say, 'Julia is now a girl of thirteen, and so proud of her father. She, too, would despise me.' You mean the 'me' for me. Well, the day will come when the me will be you. Then there will be a son also to despise his father for casting off his mother.

"How much easier it would be for you, for me, for both of them, that you make this, which you admit, honorable amend now when there is some good reason for the amend, than to delay it until they will despise you for your cowardice as well as your life? Oh, it makes me blush to think of it, your life of sin and shame.

"But I suppose I must go on suffering forever. I see no alternative. I hoped that when you were re-elected that you would redeem your promise to me, but I see now that you are as afraid of customs and society as ever, and like everything else, the longer it is delayed the more infirm you become in your purpose.

"I am so happy to know that he is to stay here for at least another year. I know there is force in the argument that he is liable to become so much of a Frenchman in manners, tastes and habits that he never will take to the home ways. Well, there are some home ways of his father that I hope he never will take to very kindly.

"If you would only consent to let me tell him that I am his mother, that you are his father. Let me teach him to love you and respect you—pardon me, I have said I would never mention this to you again.

"I was near him last night when Bernhardt gave an exhibition of her power and strength in Camille. He rose with clenched fist when the father, Mons. Duval, came in to speak to Camille of his son. Oh, it made my poor heart ache to look at him, to see his tears for that poor woman. Did he but know that the woman whose longing eyes were ever turned toward him was his mother, that her hair is white for grief, unrequited love—to tell him but that, what would he say of his father—I mean of the society—that has thus so cruelly killed her joy, her happiness, her life.

"Oh, Camille, Camille, Camille, the which I am, I am, I am.

Your own,

"ETHEL."

"PARIS.

"MY DEAR: Another year is here. I know that he must leave me now. I saw him but yesterday on the Champs Elysees. It was so hard to think of, to endure, to be separated. You will forgive me—yes I know you

will. I caught his hand, I kissed his brow. Some time when you find that you are nearing that other shore, when your boat is dashing to pieces on the rocky coast of your stormy life, call him, tell him you are his father, and that one day on the streets of Paris his mother kissed him.

"Tell him that that father who drove his son from the side of the woman he loved because he was no better than she is yourself, his father, that his mother is poor, poor, poor Camille. But break my heart for I must hold my tongue.

"You say that you will provide for me, that you will keep me informed on all matters concerning him. Yes, you will do everything but let me own him, love him, be his mother, your wife. Yes, you will feed me through the bars that society has builded between us. You said they were mere fictions, that they did not exist in fact. Yes, fictions indeed! They are the fictions that are stranger and stronger than truth—stronger than iron bars. If I had been guilty of theft, of larceny, of homicide, of manslaughter, yea, of murder even, there might be some hope of release, of looking again into the faces of loved ones, but these fictions keep me forever from the cooling waters though I am steeped in them to the lips.

"I hope no longer—I wait. I wish I could feel the faith that inspired the lines:

"'What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years.
My heart shall reap where it has sown
And garner up its fruit of tears.'

"I weary you, I know, but if I did not sometimes pour out my overfull heart I would be mad. I would tell the story of my ruined life, and I know you would rather I moan to you than have the world know of it.

"But will I never see you? Why can't I come home? Oh, tell me this. I'll not bother you. I'll not go near him, but let me be in the land where you both do live.

"I will hang on each minute until I hear you say the word, as the drowning man hangs and clings to the straw. Come home. Will it be come home on this earth? How gladly, if the Master would only say come home, Magdalen, come home. Oh, why can't these legal fictions sometimes give place to His blessed words? Why can't the world say to these storms of wrath that ever break and beat up against this misguided life, 'Peace, be still?' Why can't these bitter waters of Marah be changed into Cana's wine?

"Oh, the two bleeding hands that once did press the grapes of Eschol come again to this earth, say again to the blood-thirsty, to the vindictive,

the unmerciful, the wicked, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.'

"But enough.

"I am

"'The shadow of your life that once was your secret joy.'

"ETHEL."

Ashton laid these letters down with a heavier heart than he had ever known before. He took up the one postmarked August 30 and read. It ran as follows:

"MY DEAR RUSSELL: I have decided that the time has come. You will never name the day. You will never admit me to your household,

"I shall call on you at your home on Thursday at three P. M.

"ETHEL ASHTON."

And here is the reply:

"WEDNESDAY.

"ETHEL DEAR: I have your letter of yesterday, and if I ever allowed myself to be surprised at anything, it would be at this unreasonable demand. Unreasonable I say for many reasons. You know that I have done everything to avoid scandal—to avoid disgracing you, John, my daughter and myself.

"I know that it is something to be deprived of the love and comfort of your son, but you forget that as it is you alone suffer, but that if at this time you were to become known not only you, but him, my daughter and myself would be made to feel this deep and lasting disgrace.

"As it is, they are happy. I have kept them in ignorance of their relations. I intend telling them before I die, for fear of some unforeseen accident. I have some of your letters that he will recognize as being applied to himself—sufficient proof of the fact that he is your son.

"You plague and torment me with words and vows and statements made you more than a third of a century ago, when we were both in the hot blood of our youth, so to speak. Can't you reflect that when the blood is hot the soul is prodigal in lending to the tongue vows?

"You seem to think it no small thing that I have changed my views as to 'legal fictions.' Words seem to stick to your mind as though you were a lawyer devoted to fictions.

"You seem never to tire ranting about society. What has society to do with us? You say yours was a misguided life. True. But that is no affair of society's now. Society knows nothing of it and it would be worse than folly to mention it at this late date.

"You insist upon a marriage now to cure defects of thirty-three years ago. You charge me with bad faith because I refuse. You say I vowed that I would. I admit that I did say that if it could be done on your return from Europe without the little episode of so long ago coming to the surface, I saw no reason why we could not, but the more I thought of him, of my daughter, of myself, the more I saw the ruin of such a course to all of us.

"You say that it will some time needs must be known to both of them to avoid the dread of my life. True, and I hope to tell them in time to avoid their marriage. They are now so happy in their love that to intrude this knowledge upon them would almost amount to a crime.

"I have managed to keep them in ignorance of their relation, and from such a fatal step, until they have arrived at that period in their lives that they will not feel the loss so keenly as in their younger days. I feel myself competent to manage this matter without any entangling alliances of marriage on my part. That would only have a tendency to drag our past into bold perspective.

"Calm yourself, Ethel dear, and let us rest content to see our passions die, that others may not be disgraced.

"R. B."

"Is it possible." said Julia, "that father could write such a brutal letter as that to a woman that he had ever loved?"

Even with that father before him cold in death, Ashton hoped that the woman had administered a fitting rebuke, and he was anxious to know what she said.

"Here is her reply."

"Go on."

"SATURDAY.

"O NOBLE JUDGE! It is ever thus a second Daniel comes to judgment. Is this your real self? Has it been a mask that you have worn for thirty-five years?

"If I was to believe that it would kill me, it will kill me.

"If you ever allowed yourself to be surprised! Then it has come to this, your love would be surprised if you would only allow it. O the cruel, cold, calculating man won't even allow himself to be surprised. Yes, I see. What you have done, you have done not because you loved me, not because

you loved our dear son, but because you dreaded 'Scandal!' You feared that the mother might be an unwelcome guest at your door, and embarrassing withal, if she had the proof of your guilt at her side.

"The upright judge could frown down a lone woman, single-handed and helpless, if she stood alone. O I see it all now. Yes. It takes the tears, and groans, and heart-aches of thirty-three years crystalized into a single lense before a woman has sufficient aid to her vision to see that the man she loves only means to protect himself and avoid 'Scandal!'

"'But you forget that, as it is, you alone suffer.' Yes, I *had* forgotten that, truly I had. No, no, that is not the fact; I never knew until this heartless letter informed me that I was alone the sufferer.

"O, my head, my heart, how the agony of thirty-five years rolls back and mangles and crushes, and tortures me. Yet it is well that I did not know it all, all these long, long years.

"It would be a deep and lasting disgrace if I were to be known! O how kind you are! How generous your love! Yes, I see again that the law is at work. It would be a disgrace if it were known. Crime and disgrace are only so when known. What a comfortable doctrine! A criminal is not a criminal until once apprehended, arrested, convicted. To be found out, is to be guilty. To deceive a woman, break her heart, take away her peace of mind, kidnap her child, torture her for thirty-three years, is no disgrace to a man. The law — society — holds him guiltless so long as he is able to frown it down. O the jocose satire of living, and loving such a man!

"You say I 'plague and torment' you. Plague and torment are legal fictions. Your hot blood that caused your soul to be so prodigal in lending vows to your tongue has cooled off now, and the lent vows have all been returned. Yes, with men vows are but conveniences; the tongue can borrow from the soul when the blood is hot, straightway to be returned again when the blood is cool.

"That is the personification of cold blood, that truly is *Man*.

"No small thing that you have changed your views of legal fictions. I have changed my mind now. I see that it is a very small thing for you to do. It is not I, the lawyer. No, I *am* devoted to fictions in a way entirely different from the devotion with which lawyers esteem them.

"Lawyers trample under foot to-day the fictions they contended for yesterday. At the sound of the jingling guineas, they shout, 'Long live the king,' yesterday; put a retainer in the other hand, and to-morrow they vociferate louder than yesterday, 'Down with the monarchy, up with the people.'

"But the lawyers are not the cause, they are but the fruit of customs and precedents. They are but the means that the world possesses for measuring society's capacity for specific heat. They blubber over before the boiling point is reached; they congeal before the mercury falls to zero, not because they possess superior virtues or are degraded by excessive vices, but because they stand for and represent that lack of difference, that infintesimal space between the best and the worst of mankind.

"I blame not you, I think better of you than you give me credit for. I trusted you then, I trust you now. You was yourself once, now you are society's measurement for specific heat capacity. You stand for society, that is the custom, that is the law, that is the Common Law, that is the Levitical Law

"'And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman.' Yes, even they let the man go. 'Now Moses in the law,' mark you, 'in the law commanded us that such should be stoned.'

"More than eighteen hundred years have rolled over the hand-writing on the sand and obliterated it all. The scribes and Pharisees have become the scoffing by-word of scorn and reproach among all nations, yet 'the law' outweighs the 'neither do I condemn thee,' of the Master.

"Never tire ranting about society. What has society to do with you or me? My misguided life is no affair of society's now! Then your paroxysms of grief were passions that a man might play. Then your white hairs, your long agony, and fear, and dread, were caused by air-drawn daggers—things but to frighten children with in the dark! Then the forever 'wait,' 'not yet' that you have imposed upon me was no affair that society controlled? No, it was abnegation on your part. No, it did not even amount to self-denial to you. I remember now your exact words, 'you alone suffer.'

"Your next paragraph is a startling statement for a lawyer—a judge—to make on the heels of that other: that society has nothing to do with us. If it has not, pray tell me then from whence will come 'the ruin of such a course to all of us?' How lame the excuse of your noble mind when your conscience tells you that you are simply hiding behind subterfuge.

"The imparting to them the knowledge of their relation 'would almost amount to a crime.' How long since has your conscience become so tender in the contemplation of crime?

"The 'bold perspective' of the past is your ghost that ever confronts you and will never down, the perturbed spirit that will not let you rest.

"The last sentence would apply equally well to the mind that suggested

it. Be calm, be calm, when disgrace comes, for our passions will never die while we live.

"Yours in disgrace, "ETHEL."

Ashton threw open the shutters and drew aside the curtains. He walked to the center of the room. His fingers were interlaced, arms extended, palms downward. The question marks of his life were all swept away, he moved toward the dead woman. He understood everything now.

Julia had thrown herself on the floor beside her father and buried her face in her hands. For the first time in their lives their feelings and emotions sprung from widely different sources. He did not ask her to assist him, he divined the shock to her sensitive soul.

He approached the dead body of the woman, lifted the left arm from off the pillow, let it rest by the side. Took her hand from that of the Judge. Raised her lifeless head with his right hand, with his left he placed both her hands in her lap and then changing his position to her right side, put his left arm round her neck and shoulders,and drew her to him, her form resting against his strong shoulder, he picked her up as a mother would her sleeping babe, turned half round and laid her on the bed beside Judge Bullion.

As she lay there reposed in death, there was an expression of grief on her countenance, every feature told how she had suffered.

Her white hair and black bonnet formed a striking contrast to her pallid face, her eyes and lips half open, her long lashes, yet black, gave the face a look of beauty and expression that not even death with all its terrors could drive away.

Ashton smoothed down the folds of her heavy black dress, her veil slightly covering the side of her face next that of the Judge. He folded her hands on her bosom. Her right hand in death seemed to rest very near that lifeless heart, fretted with fires of grief, pain, danger, obloquy, unrequited longing and sorrow, buttressed with shame and contumely.

He assisted Julia to rise, they stood at the feet of the dead, motionless, mute, dumb.

The gentle ripple that for the moment had only disturbed the busy life of Judge Bullion in the morning of his manhood had been lashed into fury, hurricane, whirlwind, cyclone in the evening of his days, until now, the crested waves, white with foam and delirium, broke in mad, wild, fury and grief, upon rocky and merciless shores, and the little boat freighted with the two hearts was dashed to pieces, and two lives had gone out.

Ashton looked into her face, she drew close to him, brother, sister, wife, husband! O that agony. From the depths of his soul he cried "Father, Father, Father. O my Mother, Mother, Mother."

O death, thou great reconciler. Thy terrors drive away all our severity and rouse all our tenderness. On the glimmering outlash of the murderous thought may be seen the backward gleam of repentance.

The veil had been lifted, the strong light at first had smitten him with blindness, he recovered now. His sufferings paled in pitiless gloom when compared with the agony of that mother's life.

"My children," how these words had affected him when on the day of their admittance they fell from the lips of Judge Bullion.

His father, his mother, his sister. He turned and looked into the living face of his only relative, it was ghastly pale. The conflicting emotions of her heart were painfully visible in the gleam of her eyes. Her mother's wrong rose before her, her mother's ghost stood by the side of her father with outstretched hand.

Her feelings were as much in sorrow as in anger, but for the love she bore her husband-brother she would have given utterance to that fierce and bitter denunciation that rose in her heart. As she looked upon these dead faces the thought of pity drove out pity and they were linked by indissoluble chains. "*Villain, Villain, Villain. Paramour, Paramour, Paramour!*"

O Whyfore? Wherefore doth this lack of marriage heap up misery? Then that wail of grief too crushing for earth rang out in Heaven, louder than booming cannon at beleaguered gates, fiercer than lightning's glare athwart the sky, it flashed through the long deep corridors of Heaven's chancery, and rolled on through the depths of infinite pity. Whyfore, Wherefore?

In the gathering gloom of the coming night, and shame, Ashton peered into the faces of the dead and murmured, "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings *are* against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory."

CHAPTER XXXIV

"That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain."

SO thought Ashton as he searched for Judge's Bullion's last will among the files of his private papers. He found nothing that indicated any wish that his father might have entertained as to the distribution of his estate. The Judge had been too much perplexed in his life to think of his death. So tired was he of his miserable existence that he was willing that death should be the be all and end all.

In his search, Ashton came upon a manuscript that evidently had been written by Judge Bullion shortly after his marriage. From notes, *data* and references the manuscript was designed as an introduction to a book in which he intended to attack the marriage relation as an effete system of the past. It was entitled "Victims of Marriage."

The thoughtful reader will at once see that the writer of the foregoing pages has only attempted to piece out what he conceives Judge Bullion would have written in support of the doctrine of his paper.

No better evidence of a man's daily life can be wished than the thoughts he entertains in the secret chambers of his brain. In proof of this it is proposed to offer the unfinished manuscript as a fitting sequel to Judge Bullion's life.

THE MANUSCRIPT.

"I never was attached to that great sect
Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion; though it is in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which these poor slaves with weary foot-steps tread
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and so
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe
The dreariest and longest journey go."

"Whether the germ was created for the purpose of producing a perfect flower, or the perfect flower was painted in all its glory and loveliness for the purpose of re-producing a perfect germ, is only known to him who fashioned them. Whether life was breathed into the human clay that love might have a place to dwell, or love suggested life, we are equally in doubt.

"We make careful selections of perfect germs that we may have faultless flowers, but we pay little or no attention to the re-production and continued existence of human life, and we seem to care less for the close relation that ought to exist between life and love.

"A great deal has been said and written about life in the abstract, as, 'A mighty River,' 'A Stage,' 'A Race Course,' it has furnished a theme for poetry and song. But the argus-eyed nineteenth century has covered all this allegory, and poetry and song with question marks, and on every page of the past has written investigation—and demands for the future, facts, facts, facts.

Investigation is peering into the opening eyes of every kindling bud of every cradle and asking, "Whither?" Is this the result of love or accident? Have the parties who are responsible for the existence of this new-born life the power and means to make its journey one of light, and joy, and loveliness, or will it be abandoned to tread alone the trackless sands of life's bleak and cheerless desert where no flowers of comfort ever bloom?

The world is filled with caricatures of human life, that where not conceived in love, were not prompted by a yearning for an existence by the producing causes, and the result is both a blighting and a biting curse.

The seed has produced its thorny and thankless fruit, the ripened bitterness of which is more galling than ingratitude, sharper than a serpent's tooth, a living, walking allegory of self-rebuke and self-reproach. Accident, mistake, thoughtlessness, willful and malicious gratification of passion, regardless of consequences. Darkness, not light; misery, not happiness; sorrow, not song; shame, not honor; grief, not joy; dispair, not hope.

The blear-eyed and blundering past has been howling itself hoarse about how to get sorrow and suffering, sin, disease, filth and poverty out of the world. The keen-eyed, practical present is busying itself over the more important question, how to prevent their coming into the world.

The frenzied fanaticism of asinine anarchy has been fishing in the troubled sea of debate and agitation and when it breaks open the vase it has dragged from these stormy deeps

it will unloose the giant thought, which, like the demon loosed from the vase by the fisherman in the Arabian Nights, it will turn and destroy its deliverers. The thin subterfuges that now set labor and capital at war with each other will be swept away. The causes of poverty, filth, disease, rags, rage, riot and revenge must be sought elsewhere. That condition is not a whim, a fancy. That the dust and ashes of accident, mistake, ignorance, thoughtlessness and a willful and malicious disregard for natural laws can never produce good results, no matter though they be watered with the blood of millions of unfortunate defenders and advocates.

The vaunted boast that the race is "free for all" in this land of liberty, push and progress, is gush and rot. Is fiction, and not fact. You may as well argue that the skunk could be attar of roses, night-blooming cereus; that the dog-fennel could be a daisy, the toad-stool a king's tiara, a poodle a grey-hound, a donkey a thoroughbred, the leopard a rhinoceros, the camelopard an elephant, an Ethiopian as white as marble, as that the child born in the tenement house can surround itself with flowers, light, love and joy, that its start is equal with the child possessed of all the advantages of parentage, progress, education, health, hope and home.

Life is a fact. Civilization and government are but fleeting shadows—broken fragments of the many colors of the human kaleidoscope, ever shifting and never repeating themselves. Alluring us on by deceptive similarities and flattering us that to-morrow will be happy because to-day was not, as

though good days were the results of chance and not the very life-blood of all that is precious and best in the world.

Causes will produce effects, seeds will bear fruits, and time will smite with its blighting curse what was once the sovereign sanctuary, and earth will tremble with the crash of doom and change will set at naught the solemn invocation of Him who spake as never man spake, because His words have been set at naught and truth stripped of its power.

What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. No, and no man ever will. But then God never had any hand in the misfits of modern society. God never put the seal of his approval upon partnerships for the multiplication of criminals, crime and misery, upon the blear-eyed accidents that walk in countless numbers, or are carried on the tired arms and shrunken bosoms of hopeless and despairing mothers. God never sanctioned any contract that had for its chief end and aim, by one of the contracting parties, the control of the other for the gratification of lust and passion; never looked with approval upon the hideous malformation of uncontrolled passion, and the loathing detestation of helpless and despairing submission. He has no pleasure in idiocy, insanity, scrofula, consumption and all the other ills that flesh is heir to. No, no, let us still believe that God is good. That He delights in the union of two souls and two hearts as long as the one is the counterpart of the other. But let us not lay the flattering unction to our souls that the second person of the trinity ever placed the seal of His approval upon an unequal and an unwise union.

Like is attracted to like with unerring instinct, but it is absurd to say that the first mistaken impulse of a misguided and undiciplined heart shall bind and control a life that is to be broadened with years and be enriched with culture and experience. It is outrage infinite to make the mistakes of an unwise union the only inheritance of the offspring.

The ultimatum of all union of the sexes, be it from the brainless oyster to the highest type of man and womanhood, is reproduction. The higher the type of civilization, the more absolute the demand for perfection in the producers. The production of the perfect in the physical, moral, intellectual and social demands a perfect union of the producers. And perfect union comprehends perfection in every particular in which we seek perfection in the produced. It would seem almost idle to assert what at first blush appears to be a truism, to-wit: That without intention on the part of the actor no great good or evil had been done, if it was not for the fact that so many of the human race were accidents, unintended, unwanted, uncalled for, unwelcome, unprepared for, and unprepared to successfully buffet the angry waves of life's turbulent and stormy ocean.

It is palpably true that the man who in his early life, before laying a foundation for a competency, is so unfortunate as to have a large family is rarely successful in any other enterprise.

In every State and Territory in this broad land where marriage is recognized and protected by law there are statutory provisions aimed to save the State or municipality from

the burden of caring for and supporting a certain class of children known to the common law as bastards. These statutes are so framed that if the mother or some one in her behalf does not prosecute the putative father and compel him to support the child, the commonwealth is authorized to commence proceedings and save the State or municipality from the expense of such child's care and support. Strange as it may seem, no one has yet ever been found who has had the hardihood to attack the wisdom and justice of such a wholesome regulation. And stranger still than all that, no one has ever had the hardihood to even suggest that the wholesome provision that is thrown round the illegitimate shall not extend to the more fortunate (?) one society has been pleased to style the legitimate. The answer is ready in the mind of the reader, and in ordinary parlance is about this: There is no necessity for such regulation, for the reason that the law of parental love and affection for the offspring born in lawful wedlock is a better safeguard for the child than any statute. Who would not be glad to accept the answer, and who would not have faith in its truth, if it was not for the fact that countless thousands of helpless, starving, unprotected, unclothed, unfed and unhoused legitimate waifs were holding up their naked and starving bodies and imploring a charitable State for that protection and care which has been denied or could not be furnished by legitimate and affectionate parents?

If there is wisdom in compelling the man—who is barred by statute and the unwritten law of society—to provide for

his occasional offspring inflicted upon the State, much more then is there wisdom in compelling, by statute, the man who is authorized by law and society, to burden the State to any extent his unbridled passion and lust may demand, to care for and protect and support his legitimate issue.

The unwritten law of the land—that is, the law of society—as well as the statutes of the several States, deny a woman the right to become the mother of children except she conform to certain rules and regulations, the most absurd and unreasonable. Unless she contracts to love and obey one man as long as they both do live. By the terms of which said contract she, as one of the contracting parties, ceases to be a party as soon as the contract is consummated, being swallowed up in the other party, forever losing her identity. The screaming farce in this would-be contract being the requirement that she do all this in absolute ignorance of what is implied in the obligations forced upon her. Before she is allowed the blessed privilege of staking her life, with an even chance of losing it, that she may have an offspring, she is compelled to put herself under bond to love and serve a man for life whose very presence may be repulsive in a single day. If the world only knew how many thousand wives look back upon the bridal chamber as the door to a living tomb, it would more fully understand the causes of haggard faces, emaciated forms and broken down constitutions.

Prematurely old faces on children's shoulders, fits of melancholy, and a thousand idiosyncrasies are but the results

of mothers trying to place the woman and all her affections in the rear of and subject to her marriage obligations.

Can society, can civilization, standing out as it does to-day in all the electric brightness of the nineteenth century, give one good reason for saying that unless a woman is willing to put her entire life in jeopardy she shall have the fountains of her affections forever sealed up and the privilege of blessing the world and being blessed with an offspring forever denied?

Upon what theory does society claim the right of censorship over the lives and hearts of its individual members? Solely on the ground of good morals, virtue and chastity. Is a mother any the less virtuous, pure minded, chaste or moral by reason of the fact that she has not taken upon herself an obligation to do what she has no knowledge of her power or ability to do, love, honor and obey for life? Such a theory can no more be justified upon any rational view of life than can be justified the sacrifices of whole hecatombs of bleeding hearts upon the hateful altars of Moloch.

Society and the law may hold up their hands in holy horror, the doctrinaire of creeds set his face hard against the sharp and bristling facts, but the under-tow has set in and is fast carrying men and women far out on the billowy and peaceful waves of life's dreamy ocean, safe beyond the shallows and miseries of marriage conventionalities.

Society is a mumping sham, and is every day butchering its countless thousands of victims for a more hideous purpose than the slaughtering of gladiators to make a Roman holiday.

Its hollow vows are falser than Dicer's oaths. What the good of a vow that at best can only bind men and women to the broken fragments of the dead past? Is strong friendship and abiding love the result of a vow? No, no, a thousand times no. Is a waning friendship or a cooling love fanned into a newness of life by a vow? No, rather increased hate and loathing. Does a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife because he has vowed to do so? No, it is because the essence of his being goes out in search of the counterpart of his nature, and when he has found it, or thinks he has, the fear of losing it suggests the security for life. Hence the vow. If that counterpart sickens, fades, is dwarfed, is outgrown, is society the better for having the two so joined together that they act as the blades of a pair of shears, clipping and mutilating everything that comes between them?

Open the sealed history of eighteen hundred years of married misery and let the tongueless skeletons of every marriage closet tell their tales of woe, and society with all its pride and pomp will skulk and hide in pitiless gloom.

Modern society has grown into a hideous monster! engaged, principally, in driving into hopeless ruin the handsomest, and most attractive, and affectionate women, while pandering to the cold-blooded brutality of their destroyers. It embitters the lives of women, and leads men into the paths of dishonor and crime. Its commands and precepts are all summed up in "hate your neighbor and love your neighbor's wife." It delights in practicing the art of

deception. It is the completion and rounding out of the character of the smiling, damned villain. Its teachings are, "bear welcome in the eye; the hand, the tongue, be like the innocent flower" in your neighbor's parlor, that you may be the thorn and serpent under his pillow. It is the art of besmirching your neighbor's character with polished infamy, that will reflect credit upon your own. It is the insatiate god to whom we sacrifice our hearts for those we would not wish to love, that we make a charnel house of dead memories in which we entertain our friends and brood over our losses. It is the abandoning the perfect feast on the mountain, that we may batten on carion on the moor. It is the outgrowth of marriage, and its last end and aim is the rearing of victims that are to furnish the up-shot, ground-plan, and superstructure of its rotten, soul-destroying and mildewed infamy. How long, O how long will this public gallery in which we hide our best selves from our friends, that we may not disclose our worst selves to those we hate, despise and envy, continue to hold sway over the minds and hearts of men and women?

Take heart and hope, all ye lovers of liberty—not liberty to shout, and scream, and flaunt flaming banners, not liberty of speech, not liberty of the press, not liberty of franchise—but liberty that unshackles the soul, and mind, and heart of right-thinking men and women; for that band of noble women who have felt the galling chains of slavery, have builded wiser than they knew. They struggled for an opportunity to assert their individuality, they tired of living

simply a nameless entity, swallowed up in a man's life, and now they will be compelled to accept the responsibilities of their victories. They taught the world the Alpha of this advancing civilization, and they dare not refrain from lisping the Beta.

Women are fast being recognized as possessed of an individuality peculiarly their own, and the inevitable will surely follow. They must accept the responsibility of this enlarged life in which copartnership will be of their own selection, and for as long a time as it may be congenial to them.

If a woman is the architect of her own fortune, she is not in need of a figure-head to maintain it. If she wants an heir, she will not be compelled to enter into a contract to do some impossible thing and continue for life to live a burning lie to obtain the desire of her heart. She will not be compelled to accept some half dozen or more children because a man's lust and passion forces them upon her. She will not have the "family," that is, the accidental umbilical cord that binds her to the nursery for life, to hold her in fetters and waste her life in a round of anxiety and toil, superinduced by being compelled by society to live with a man for life, simply because it would not be "correct form" to do otherwise.

When the reason for the existence of a law is a dead-letter on nature's statute book, then it is time that it be repealed. The marriage relation assumes that the sole use that man and the world have for a woman is, that she be a mother, and that her life be devoted to the taking care of a

family. That the only success of her life is to be estimated by the number of living issues that grow out of her marriage relation. To a man of common sense and common decency, who will reflect for a moment, nothing can be more absurd; to a woman of brains, energy, and a mental sky, nothing can be more soul-destroying.

No man believes that he is ever better by being a hypocrite and a falsifier to himself. No man can shape his course by newly-risen laws and imperative changes and still be lip-loyal to what once was true, and long continue to smuggle new meanings under old names without losing self-respect. By the constant and habitual disregard of existing laws—which are not recognized as having any binding force upon the conscience — men become the willing instruments in the hands of unholy passions to break through and trample under foot any and all wholesome regulations that may stand between them and their desires. That is, the habit of breaking bad laws makes men lawless.

Society holds itself out to be a machine, with the quality of perpetual motion, that can get out more energy and force than has been put in to propel it. It is intended to be the panacea for all our woes, it is intended to be the nucleus of home, to build up family altars, to bind together natures that have nothing in common, to make a man of no heart, no soul, no decency, no sense of honor, no character, no sense of common honesty, no appreciation of the beautiful, a common liar of low and debasing tendencies, a common drunkard, a common fornicator, lecherous, a blasphemer, the

sum total of all villainies; the partner, and head and front of some woman all soul, heart, truth, purity, goodness, honor, loveliness, a lover of the beautiful, a worshiper at the shrine of all that lifts, that humbles, sweetens and consoles. That such a brute can monopolize such a woman, and that, too, under the sanction of law, is a burning shame, a most noted and infamous blot upon the fair name and character of the boasted civilization of the nineteenth century.

To intimate that one does not believe in or indorse the theory of the marriage relation as being of divine origin, or that it is not the sum total of all that is pure and good in the world, is to pull down on one's head all the viols of stored wrath which society has carefully selected and judicially compounded and labeled as "God sanctioned." To be given in heroic doses to any who dares question this sacred and ancient sacrament, a sacrament among the strict constructionists, a civil contract(?) among the more enlightened.

If a man and a woman, after having studied their natures, temperaments, blood lines, tendencies to beget healthful and brainy qualities, with the view to transmit them to an offspring, should have the hardihood to carry out their views without first entering into a contract to forever maintain a relation of inseparableness, they would be slandered, traduced, maligned and branded as crimnals, free-lovers, debauched, lecherous, unclean, and in fact subjected to all the persecutions that blind intolerance and ignorance could inflict upon them.

A thousand adulterers and breakers of marriage vows

would rise up to condemn the offenders, pulpit and prudery would alike utter their solemn invocations and warnings, and anathematize them and close and bolt the doors of the church and society against such uncleanness. Some married matron, who, in her state of single blessedness, had committed a thousand irregularities without being caught, who had been relieved of that which might have proved an unpleasant issue but for the aid of some experienced mid-wife or some not over-scruplous physician, would be loudest in her denunication. The nasty-nice would let loose their wash of words, and even self-convicted lewdness would furnish its elegant Billingsgate to prove that it was not marriage, and therefore worse.

The greatest of English historians observed, "From the day on which the emancipation of our literature was accomplished the purification of our literature began." The day on which woman is emancipated from the slavery of passion, legalized, that day the liberty of woman will be complete. That the marriage relation is of divine origin, or received the sanction of the second person of the Trinity, is no argument in justification of the miseries engendered and daily and hourly increasing under its sanction. As well might we justify the plunderings of the robber-kings and bandit barons, who for ages pillaged the world that they might get possession of the reputed burial place of Him who said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." As well might we justify the crimes of the inquisition for having been done in God's name.

Would you put woman on that high pedestal where she will always be courted, where she will ever be treated with the respect due her keener sensibilities and refined tastes, habits and emotions? Would you make her a mother for the pure love of being a mother, that she might have an heir of whom she could be proud, might have as many children as in her judgment she could care and provide for, and educate, physically, morally, intellectually and socially? Would you make her the proper guardian of her children, as nature intended she should be? Would you concede the logical sequence of the proposition that she is an entity, that she is an individual, that she is a citizen, that she ought to have a representation in her own proper person at the polls, that she has the power to acquire and hold property and enjoy property rights, that she shall for all time be the sole and exclusive owner, and that by reason of all these recognized facts she is mistress of her own actions, and can say who shall be the heir of her body without let or hinderance, without the jeopardizing her future by a union for life? Would you take away that assumed ownership that man has exercised over her for centuries? Then take away that contract, that living lie of marriage conventionality. Place her where she belongs, out of reach of his ownership, where she may at any moment turn from his brutality, filth and nastiness, where she may at any moment walk out into the free air and sunlight of her own better nature, and she will always be beautiful with danger's sweetness round her.

No man ever exhibits the rottenness of his nature to the

woman he courts, no man puts his true inwardness of nastiness before the woman he seeks to please, no man is profane where he desires to be loved. But place him in the position of owner and he will proceed to make an exhibition of himself and his vileness in the presence of an angel.

Take away his right of ownership, and his power to destroy the good name of woman will be gone. The aquiline beak that hawks at and tears that which it can not own, is but the fruit of eighteen hundred years of possession. As the lion's fierceness grows by what it is fed on, as the eagle's eye and beak and talons have been developed and perfected by the need of such eyes and marked peculiarities, so man's desire for ownership and control are but the outgrowth of ages and generations of brutish power and gratification, brought about by that more brutal and debasing law of society, called "marriage."

It is not often that a man so soon reaps the whirlwind after he has sown the wind. Judge Bullion's own unhappiness and wreck were directly traceable to the doctrine he wished to see promulgated. He was the victim of his own lusts and passions. Instead of being a victim of the law of marriage, he was caught in the toils of the law which nature has thrown around the ideal home.

Men sin against the inevitable of their environments, entail misery upon their offspring, and then seek to justify their transgressions by tirades against wholesome laws.

No better example of this fact could be furnished than

the fruits of his ripened theory which he left his children at his death.

If Judge Bullion had adopted as the rule of his married life another sentiment written by the same hand that introduces his argument, he would have been happy in his life and honored in his death.

The soul that seems to be ethereal fire often leads a loving heart astray. It is impossible to make each meal a sacrament, and it is equally as true that the love-lit glory of poetry and song does not always surround the fireside of every home.

Under the existing laws and the facilities with which separations can be obtained, and the apparent ease with which thousands of men and women wear their marital obligations, the once Best is fast becoming the Worst.

The duties that men and women owe to their children, to society and the State are such as to call not only for devotion to each other, but uncomplaining and heroic suffering and endurance.

Those who come up through many tribulations are worthy of much praise.

"To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy powers which seem omnipotent;
To love and bear; to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory."

When life, joy, empire and victory of the social relation is willing to pay such a price, the younger Titan of the elder brood will be good, great and joyous, beautiful and free.

The family is the holiest creation of a loving God, children the brightest and purest links that ever bound together the hearts of the honorable and noble husband and the true and loving wife.

Ashton and Julia had grown up together and their love was strong and fervent, no doubt, but they were strangers to that divine emotion that sometimes comes to great souls—"born of a moment yet born of eternity * * * * * unquestioning, unthinking, investigating nothing, proving nothing, sufficient unto itself," and while their disappointment was keen, they bore it with heroic fortitude and patience.

Henceforth they must stand without the gate whose golden bars illuminated love's paradise beyond. But who is wise enough to tell us that their contemplation of the ideal, forever barred against satiety, does not more than outweigh all the joys and pleasures that have ever been pressed by loving hands from the ripened fruit of love plucked from the thorny stems that grows hard-by life's rugged pathway?

THE END.

PRESS POINTS.

"Victims of Marriage" is the title of a novel just issued by a Columbus author.

The story is of intense interest from beginning to end, the characters are real men and women, and strongly portrayed.

Judge Bullion's advocacy of woman's absolute freedom from the restraints of the marriage relation is given in the closing chapter and is a bold and startling argument that will be met by fierce and bitter denunciations, deservedly.—*Ohio State Journal.*

The work reflects credit upon the author.

The story is not a gem in water colors, but rather a bold crayon sketch.

The author is frankness personified. On the whole "Victims of Marriage" may be truthfully said to be a stirring story presenting a forcible picture of the side of life that it has not been the habit of writers to discuss. It has a lesson for the degraded and it has another for those to whom vice is a stranger.

We may hope that this will not be the last literary effort of the author.—*Sunday News.*

The reading public ought to be acquainted with the fact that the author is a bachelor in order that a fair estimate of at least the philosophical disquisitions with which the book is loaded might be weighed and judged.

He calls a spade a spade, and is as frank as Count Tolstoi.

The plot is very ingeniously manufactured from the private papers of the late Judge Bullion.

The book is worth reading, and there are some new ideas which will not, it is to be hoped, be lost.—*Sunday Capitol* (*Columbus, O.*).

The author has plenty of ideas and is a firm believer in his own views which he defends with the vigor and close logic of the lawyer. Many of the sketches and incidents are true as life itself—far truer than people generally will believe. The author's peculiar views on many subjects make interesting reading.—*Columbus Dispatch.*

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A most remarkable book!

The author credits to the operations of the marriage relation all the woes that fall to the lot of married women. The style is a peculiar one. As concise and abrupt as Victor Hugo, in dialogue as diffuse as a village gossip, in the philosophical parts highly rhetorical.—*Sunday World.*

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